

1990

Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990

Center for Public Affairs Research (CPAR)

University of Nebraska at Omaha

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/cparpubarchives>

 Part of the [Demography, Population, and Ecology Commons](#), and the [Public Affairs Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

(CPAR), Center for Public Affairs Research, "Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990" (1990). *Publications Archives, 1963-2000*. 333.
<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/cparpubarchives/333>

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for Public Affairs Research at DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Publications Archives, 1963-2000 by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu.



Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990

North Omahans View the Omaha Area

Key Findings

- Over one-half (53.5 percent) of the North Omaha sample respondents reported making less than \$15,000 a year; 19.6 percent of the metropolitan area sample reported the same income level.
- Among single-parent households, 37.9 percent report incomes of less than \$10,000 a year.
- North Omahans are less likely to feel that the Omaha area's future looks bright.
- North Omahans are almost twice as likely as metropolitan area residents to say they are dissatisfied with the availability of jobs, quality of jobs, and opportunities to start new business.
- Community organizations and churches are more likely to be cited as among the best things about the Omaha area than is the case for metropolitan area residents, generally.
- North Omaha residents are more likely than metropolitan residents to mention the lack of jobs and business opportunities and race relations as among the worst aspects of the Omaha area.
- The proportion of North Omaha respondents giving police protection a low rating was about three times the level of all metropolitan area respondents.
- Daily shopping facilities, and services such as child care, activities for teenagers, help for the homeless, and programs for needy citizens were more likely to be given low ratings, than was the case for all metropolitan area respondents.
- Labor force participation is only about three-fourths the rate for all metropolitan area residents.
- Unemployment among North Omahans is almost four times that of the 3.4 percent rate found among the metropolitan sample; discouragement among workers is also about four times the metropolitan rate.
- The proportion of North Omaha respondents underemployed due to too few working hours or a mismatch of skills is 31.3 percent; this is about one and a half times that of the metropolitan sample.
- About one in four (26.7 percent) North Omahans who have jobs work full time and have household incomes of less than \$15,000 a year.
- The proportion of North Omahans very worried about crime is almost 50 percent higher than in the metropolitan area.

Background

The Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 included interviews with 200 adults from minority households in seven census tracts in North Omaha (tracts 7-12 and 59.02).¹ Among the areas examined in the survey were ratings of the Omaha area's quality of life, evaluations of services, concern about crime and actions taken because of concern about crime, and labor force characteristics and experiences.

This report summarizes responses for the North Omaha sample; findings from the metropolitan sample are presented in a separate report series.² After a look at the demographic characteristics of the 200 adult respondents, the report examines the North Omaha area's quality of life, employment, and housing conditions. Next, ratings of the best and worst facets of life in the Omaha area are highlighted. The fourth section of the report provides details on North Omahans' satisfaction with a variety of services, facilities and programs. The final two sections focus in greater detail on two issues—labor force experiences and crime and the fear of crime.

Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 provides summary information about selected demographic characteristics of the North Omaha respondents. As can be seen, 60.9 per-

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of North Omaha Respondents

	Percent
Age:	
18-24	18.6
25-34	17.1
35-49	22.6
50-64	20.6
65 +	21.1
Gender:	
Male	40.5
Female	59.5
Education:	
8th or less	8.1
High school, incomplete	18.8
High school graduate	31.5
Technical/Trade/Business	8.1
College, incomplete	24.9
College graduate	8.6
Income:	
\$0-9,999	30.9
\$10,000-14,999	22.6
\$15,000-24,999	18.5
\$25,000-34,999	15.5
\$35,000-49,999	7.7
\$50,000 +	4.8
Home:	
Rent	35.5
Own	60.9

cent own their home, while 35.5 percent are renters.

Just over one-fourth (26.9 percent) of the respondents report having less than a high school education, with roughly 1 in 3 (31.5 percent) saying they have graduated from high school. Less than 10 percent have graduated from college and 24.9 percent have taken some college courses, but not graduated.

Over one-half (53.5 percent) of those responding indicated they made less than \$15,000 a year. Twenty eight percent reported making \$25,000 a year or more (see table 1).

Table 2 presents selected information for all North Omaha sample households with children, and for those headed by a single parent. As can be seen, nearly one-fourth of the households with children have incomes below \$10,000 a year. While the proportion of these respondents who are in the labor force is higher than is the case for the general North Omaha adult population, the unemployment rate is also higher.

Table 2. Selected Characteristics of North Omaha Households with Children

	All Households With Children	Single Parent Households
	-----Percent-----	
Income:		
\$0-9,999	22.5	37.9
\$10,000-14,999	28.2	34.5
\$15,000-24,999	16.9	13.8
\$25,000 +	32.4	13.8
Percent in-labor force	74.0	71.9
Percent unemployed	14.0	26.1

Among single-parent households in the North Omaha sample (see table 2) over one-third (37.9 percent) report incomes of less than \$10,000 a year. Almost 3 out of 4 (72.4 percent) single parent households in the area have incomes of less than \$15,000 a year. As was the case for all households with children, the labor force participation rate for individuals from single-parent households is higher than the rate for all adults from the North Omaha area. The unemployment rate—26.1 percent—is also higher; in fact, it is over twice the rate generally found among adults in the North Omaha labor force and eight times the metropolitan rate.

Outlook on the Future, Quality of Life, Employment, and Housing

The Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 also asked minority respondents in North Omaha to indicate their levels of agreement with a series of statements about the Omaha area's quality of life, including the outlook for the future, the quality of leadership, and the need for change. In addition, respondents were asked to indicate their satisfaction with the

Omaha area's employment and housing situation.

To develop information about views of the Omaha area's quality of life, the interviewers read respondents several different statements. Each person was asked whether he or she strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with each statement.

Outlook on the Future

As table 3 shows, 57.0 percent of the North Omaha respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the Omaha area's future looks bright. This is considerably lower than is the case for the metropolitan area. For example, among metro sample respondents 89.3 percent either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement on the Omaha area's future.

Table 3 - North Omahans' Responses to the Statement, "The Omaha area's future looks bright."

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	6	3.1
Agree	104	53.9
Disagree	76	39.4
Strongly disagree	7	3.6
Total	193	100.0

Age, education, income and gender made little difference in whether North Omaha respondents thought the future of the Omaha area looked bright. Regardless of demographic group, a majority of the respondents felt the area's future was bright.

Omaha as a Place to Live

Table 4 shows the responses to the statement that the Omaha area is an

Table 4 - North Omahans' Responses to the Statement, "The Omaha area is an ideal place to live."

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	5	2.6
Agree	149	76.0
Disagree	34	17.3
Strongly disagree	8	4.1
Total	196	100.0

ideal place to live. More than three-fourths (78.6 percent) of the North Omaha respondents agreed or strongly agreed. This proportion was much higher than that for the outlook for the future.

There were no statistically significant differences across the various subgroups in response to the statement that the Omaha area is an ideal place to live.

The Need for Change

To assess attitudes toward change and the need for change in the Omaha area, each person was asked to respond to two statements. One addressed North Omaha residents' perceptions of satisfaction with the Omaha area, and the second sought to find whether respondents thought the Omaha area was good enough without change.

Table 5 provides information on the number and percentage of respondents agreeing or disagreeing that most residents of the Omaha area are satisfied with things as they are. As the table shows, a large majority of the respondents (83.4 percent) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. In fact, the number of persons who strongly disagreed was almost equal to the sum of those who strongly agreed and agreed.

Table 5 - North Omahans' Responses to the Statement, "Most residents of the Omaha area are satisfied with things as they are."

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	1	0.5
Agree	31	16.1
Disagree	131	67.9
Strongly disagree	30	15.5
Total	193	100.0

Responses to the Statement, "The Omaha area is good enough as it is without trying to change it."

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	-	-
Agree	20	10.1
Disagree	142	71.7
Strongly disagree	36	18.2
Total	198	100.0

While 45.1 percent of the metropolitan sample respondents agreed with this statement, just 16.6 percent of the North Omaha respondents agreed—a 3 to 1 difference.

Responses to the statement about respondents' satisfaction with things as they are differed by education level. The higher the level of education, the more likely a respondent would be to disagree with the statement. Age, income and gender appeared to make no difference in responses.

Table 5 also indicates that the vast majority of North Omaha respondents thought the Omaha area needed change. In response to the statement that the Omaha area is good enough without change, 89.9 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. Only 10.1 percent agreed with the statement, and no one strongly agreed. These figures are very similar to those found for the metropolitan sample.

Demographic characteristics of the respondents made a considerable difference as to whether they thought change was necessary. Those aged 35 to 64, those with high school degrees or college, those with incomes above \$20,000, and women were more likely to disagree with the statement.

Some of the largest differences can be explained by education and income. While 22.6 percent of respondents without high school degrees thought change was unnecessary, only 2.5 percent of those with some college agreed. Looking at income, 12.7 percent of those earning less than \$20,000 agreed with the statement that change was unnecessary, compared with 1.8 percent of those earning \$20,000 or more.

Quality of Leadership

Two statements focused on the quality of governmental and corporate leaders in the Omaha area. Data presented in table 6 indicate general approval of the area's leadership. When asked to respond to the statement that the Omaha area has good governmental leaders, 62.5 percent agreed or strongly agreed. This is lower than the 77.5 percent of the metropolitan sample which agreed or strongly agreed that the area has good government leaders.

North Omaha respondents also were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statement that the Omaha area has good corporate leaders. Table 6 shows that 69.2 percent agreed or strongly agreed with that statement. The rating for corporate leaders is somewhat higher than the rating for governmental leaders, but in both cases the majority of the respondents agreed that Omaha has good leaders.

Respondents aged 65 or older were most likely to agree that the Omaha area has good governmental leaders and good corporate leaders.

Table 6 - North Omahans' Responses to the Statement, "The Omaha area has good governmental leaders."

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	2	1.1
Agree	108	61.4
Disagree	57	32.4
Strongly disagree	9	5.1
Total	176	100.0

Responses to the Statement, "The Omaha area has good corporate leaders."

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	2	1.1
Agree	126	68.1
Disagree	51	27.6
Strongly disagree	6	3.2
Total	185	100.0

Employment and Business Opportunities

To measure attitudes about the Omaha area's employment situation, North Omaha respondents were asked to rate the availability of jobs, the quality of jobs, and opportunities to start new businesses. First each person was asked to indicate how important each item was to him or her. Response choices were very important, somewhat important, slightly important, and not important. Next, respondents were asked how satisfied they were with each of the items. Choices included very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, and very dissatisfied. (See the

Table 7 - North Omahans' Satisfaction and Importance Ratings for Jobs and Business Opportunities in the Omaha Area

Item	Satisfied, Unimportant*	Percentage Rating		Dissatisfied, Important [§]
		Satisfied, Important [†]	Dissatisfied, Unimportant [‡]	
Availability of jobs (n = 190)	0.0	25.8	2.1	72.1
Quality of jobs (n = 187)	0.5	35.3	1.1	63.1
Opportunities to start new business (n = 157)	0.0	40.8	1.9	57.3

*Respondents were somewhat or very satisfied with services that were slightly or not important to them.

†Respondents were somewhat or very satisfied with services that were somewhat or very important to them.

‡Respondents were somewhat or very dissatisfied with services that were slightly or not important to them.

§Respondents were somewhat or very dissatisfied with services that were somewhat or very important to them.

Note: n = number of respondents in category.

section, "Measuring Service Satisfaction," on page 9 for a more detailed discussion of this measure.)

Table 7 shows that the majority of the North Omaha respondents stated they were dissatisfied with the area's employment situation and that this was an important issue to them. Availability of jobs received the worst marks, as 72.1 percent said they were dissatisfied with the availability of jobs and felt jobs were important. A somewhat smaller proportion (63.1 percent) said they were dissatisfied with the quality of jobs in the Omaha area and that this was important to them. Finally, 57.3 percent reported they were dissatisfied with new business opportunities in the Omaha area, and that this was an important issue.

In each of these areas — availability of jobs, quality of jobs, and opportunities to start new business — North Omaha respondents were almost twice as likely to say they were dissatisfied than were metropolitan area respondents.

For each of the job- and business-related items listed in table 7, respondents who were 35 or older, who had annual household incomes under \$20,000, or who had some college generally were less satisfied. The most significant differences in satisfaction were for age and income, and they occurred for the availability and quality of jobs. For example, 81.1 percent of the respondents 65 or older were dissatisfied with the availability of jobs, but 60.9 percent of those aged 18 to 34 were dissatisfied. With quality of jobs, 69.6 percent of the respondents with annual household incomes below \$20,000 were dissatisfied, while 50.9 percent of those with \$20,000 or more were dissatisfied.

Satisfaction with Housing

Two aspects of housing were addressed in the survey: housing for sale and rental housing. For each housing type, the survey contained items on the amount, price, and quality of housing. As with the employment items, respondents were first asked to indicate how

important the item was to them, then to rate their satisfaction with it.

Housing for Sale

Results for the housing-for-sale aspects are presented in table 8. As the table shows, North Omaha respondents were satisfied with the amount and quality of housing for sale but were dissatisfied with the price. The highest rating went to the amount of housing for sale in the Omaha area, with 56.9 percent of the respondents saying that they were satisfied and it was important to them. In contrast, 38.1 percent of the respondents said that they were satisfied with the price of housing and it was important to them.

Few differences emerge among subgroups of respondents. Persons 65 or older were more likely to be dissatisfied with the amount of housing for sale. Respondents without high school degrees were more likely to be satisfied with the price and quality of housing for sale.

Table 8 - North Omahans' Satisfaction and Importance Ratings for Housing in the Omaha Area

Item	Satisfied, Unimportant*	Percentage Rating		Dissatisfied, Important [§]
		Satisfied, Important [†]	Dissatisfied, Unimportant [‡]	
Amount of housing for sale (n = 160)	7.53	56.9	6.9	28.8
Price of housing for sale (n = 160)	5.09	38.1	3.8	53.1
Quality of housing for sale (n = 159)	3.8	50.9	3.1	42.1
Amount of rental housing (n = 146)	5.5	48.6	5.5	40.4
Price of rental housing (n = 143)	1.4	39.2	9.1	50.3
Quality of rental housing (n = 147)	1.4	45.6	8.8	44.2

*Respondents were somewhat or very satisfied with services that were slightly or not important to them.

†Respondents were somewhat or very satisfied with services that were somewhat or very important to them.

‡Respondents were somewhat or very dissatisfied with services that were slightly or not important to them.

§Respondents were somewhat or very dissatisfied with services that were somewhat or very important to them.

Rental Housing

Table 8 also provides information on ratings for rental housing. Again, the same three housing items were examined: availability, price and quality. As the table shows, the ratings generally are lower for rental housing than housing for sale; there is no item where the majority of respondents are satisfied and the item is important to them. However, the pattern for the three facets is similar for both types of housing, as respondents said they were least satisfied with price and most satisfied with the amount of rental housing available. The respective proportions are 39.2 percent and 48.6 percent.

Rental housing ratings varied most by age, as respondents aged 18 to 34 were more likely to say that they were satisfied with all three facets and that they were important to them. In addition, men were more satisfied with the amount of rental housing, and respondents with high school degrees or less were more likely to be satisfied with the quality of rental housing.

North Omaha Residents Look at the Best and Worst of the Omaha Area

Residents of North Omaha were asked open-ended questions on their opinions of the three best and the three worst things about the Omaha area. Another open-ended question asked respondents what they felt were the three most important problems that the Omaha area should be trying to address.

Open ended questions were used because they have no response categories provided; therefore, they allow the survey participants to respond to issues in their own words. In addition, open-ended questions solicit answers to issues and priorities that researchers designing a social survey cannot anticipate.

The Best of the Omaha Area

Summary information on the items mentioned by respondents as the best things about the Omaha area is presented in table 9. The methodology used in developing this information was to count the total number of times an item was mentioned as one of the three best attributes of the Omaha area. These sums were then divided by the total number of persons who answered the question, and were expressed as percentages. (The percentages do not add to 100 percent because each respondent could give up to three answers.) All tables in this section were constructed in a similar manner.

Table 9 - North Omaha Respondents' Views of the Best Things About the Omaha Area

Rank	Category	Percent
1	Quality of life	35.7
2	Schools	29.8
3	Jobs and business opportunities	25.6
4	Friendly people	22.0
5	Community organizations and churches	17.3
6	Quality of the environment	8.9
7	Entertainment and cultural activities	8.3
8	Shopping	7.7
8	Low cost of living	7.7
10	Climate	7.1
11	Slow-paced lifestyle	6.0
12	Medical facilities	5.4
12	Low crime rate	5.4
14	Redevelopment efforts	4.8
14	Parks and recreation facilities	4.8
14	Restaurants	4.8
17	Convenient location	4.2
18	Housing	3.6
18	Quality leaders	3.6
20	People address problems	3.0
21	Low traffic volume	2.4
22	Law enforcement	1.8
23	Sports	0.6

Among the top five categories mentioned by North Omahans, quality of life (35.7 percent) was mentioned most frequently as the best thing about the Omaha area. Quality of life includes comments about room for future growth, Omaha as a great place to raise a family, the size of the area's population, and that the area has good family activities. Schools (29.8 percent) followed quality of life as the second most often mentioned best

attribute of the Omaha area. Comments on schools encompass the depth of programs, caring attitude of teachers, and quality of schools.

Jobs and business opportunities (25.6 percent) and friendly people (22.0 percent) were two additional aspects mentioned by 20 percent or more of those responding in North Omaha. Rounding out the top-five ranks is community organizations and churches (17.3 percent).

For the metropolitan sample, the top five categories mentioned as the best things about the Omaha area were: schools (30.4 percent), quality of life (30.3 percent), friendly people (28.1 percent), jobs and business opportunities (26.4 percent), and entertainment and cultural activities (20.6 percent). *As can be seen four of the top five categories are the same for both the North Omaha and metropolitan samples; the only difference is the mention of community organizations and churches in North Omaha.*

The remainder of the top-10 ranks were mentioned by less than ten percent of respondents. Those items are: quality of the environment (8.9 percent), entertainment and cultural activities (8.3 percent), shopping and low cost of living (tied at 7.7 percent), and climate (7.1 percent). The quality of the environment category included facets such as the cleanliness of the community and limited pollution (air pollution and other types).

Variations in Perceptions of the Best Attributes of the Omaha Area

To better understand respondents' views, five most frequently mentioned items were examined across population sub-groups. The proportions of various population sub-groups mentioning each of the top five best attributes of the Omaha area are presented in table 10. Although quality of life and friendly people varied slightly across demographic characteristics, no significant patterns were identified; therefore, they are not summarized in the following sections.

Schools. Schools were most frequently mentioned as one of the best attributes of the Omaha area by persons between the ages of 18 and 34. Particularly pronounced is the dif-

Table 10 - Percentage of North Omaha Respondents Mentioning Top Five Best Attributes of the Omaha Area by Demographic Characteristics

	Age			Education			Income		Sex	
	18-34 (n = 60)	35-64 (n = 73)	65 + (n = 34)	No High School Degree (n = 41)	High School Degree (n = 53)	At Least Some College (n = 74)	Under \$20,000 (n = 88)	\$20,000 or More (n = 53)	Male (n = 68)	Female (n = 100)
Quality of life	33.3	39.7	29.4	31.7	43.4	32.4	33.0	39.6	35.3	36.0
Schools	40.0	27.4	17.6	24.4	24.5	36.5	35.2	24.5	26.5	32.0
Jobs or business opportunities	28.3	24.7	23.5	22.0	28.3	25.7	22.7	33.9	36.8	18.0
Friendly people	23.3	19.2	26.5	29.3	18.9	20.3	15.9	24.5	19.1	24.0
Community organizations and churches	15.0	12.3	32.4	14.6	11.3	23.0	17.0	13.2	13.2	20.0

ference between respondents aged 18-34 (40.0 percent) and those aged 65 and over (17.6 percent).

Jobs and Business Opportunities. Men (36.8 percent) were more than twice as likely as women (18.0 percent) to mention jobs and business opportunities as the best thing about the Omaha area. No other major differences were found across population subgroups.

Community Organizations and Churches. Respondents aged 65 and over were twice as likely as those aged either 18-34 or 35-64 to mention community organizations and churches as the best attribute of the Omaha area. Mention of this item did not vary appreciably across education, income, or sex.

The Worst of the Omaha Area

The worst rated attributes of the Omaha area are presented in table 11. The data were developed using the same procedure as for the best things about the Omaha area. Gangs and drugs were most often mentioned as the worst attributes of the Omaha area, with percentages of 37.5 and 33.3 respectively. Lack of jobs or business opportunities (27.6 percent) was the only other item mentioned by more than 25 percent of respondents. In addition, crime (18.8 percent) and race relations (18.2 percent) were among the top five worst mentioned things about the Omaha area.

Among the metropolitan respondents, the five most frequently men-

tioned worst things about the Omaha area were: drugs (29.1 percent), gangs (28.1 percent), high taxes (20.4 percent), crime (18.8 percent), and street conditions (18.0 percent). Three of these categories—gangs, drugs, and crime—appear in the top five worst things about the area for both samples. *However, North Omaha respondents were more likely to voice concerns about the lack of jobs and business opportunities and about race relations than were metropolitan respondents, generally.*

The five remaining categories on the top 10 worst list contain a great deal of diversity. Those items are: poor leaders (13.0 percent), law enforcement (9.4 percent), run down neighborhoods (7.8 percent), and street conditions (7.3 percent), which included smoothness of streets as well as traffic engineering. Housing policies and poor schools tied (6.3 percent) as the last of the top-10 worst things about the Omaha area.

Variations in Perceptions of the Worst Attributes of the Omaha Area

Although there were no significant differences observed across demographic characteristics by income or sex, table 12 shows some interesting variations across age and education categories in the top five worst list. These differences are summarized in the following sections.

Gangs. While 37.5 percent of all respondents mentioned gangs as one of the worst things in the Omaha area (see table 11), 59.4 percent of those

Table 11 - North Omaha Respondents' Views of the Worst Things About the Omaha Area

Rank	Category	Percent
1	Gangs	37.5
2	Drugs	33.3
3	Lack of jobs or business opportunities	27.6
4	Crime	18.8
5	Race relations	18.2
6	Poor leaders	13.0
7	Law enforcement	9.4
8	Run-down neighborhoods	7.8
9	Street conditions	7.3
10	Housing policies	6.3
10	Poor schools	6.3
12	Lack of entertainment or cultural activities	5.7
12	Housing costs	5.7
12	Low wages and incomes	5.7
15	Homelessness	4.7
16	High taxes	3.1
16	Weather	3.1
18	People	2.6
19	Overemphasis on development	2.1
20	Parks and recreational facilities	1.0
21	Poor snow removal	0.5
21	Elderly needs	0.5
21	Traffic congestion	0.5

aged 18-34, 45.8 percent of those with high school degrees only, and 43.1 percent of those with less than a high school education mentioned gangs.

Drugs. Although no major differences were found among age groups, almost one half (49.0 percent), of those without high school degrees mentioned drugs as one of the worst things about Omaha.

Table 12 - Percentage of North Omaha Respondents Mentioning Top Five Worst Attributes of the Omaha Area by Demographic Characteristics

	Age			Education			Income		Sex	
	18-34 (n = 69)	35-64 (n = 82)	65 + (n = 40)	No High School Degree (n = 51)	High School Degree (n = 59)	At Least Some College (n = 82)	Under \$20,000 (n = 109)	\$20,000 or More (n = 54)	Male (n = 78)	Female (n = 114)
Gangs	59.4	23.2	30.0	43.1	45.8	28.0	38.5	31.5	34.6	39.5
Drugs	33.3	34.1	32.5	49.0	33.9	23.2	37.6	25.9	35.9	31.6
Lack of jobs or business opportunities	21.7	36.6	20.0	11.8	22.0	41.5	24.8	37.0	26.9	28.1
Crime	15.9	18.3	25.0	29.4	13.6	15.9	22.0	16.7	14.1	21.9
Race relations	15.9	19.5	20.0	11.8	16.9	23.2	15.6	20.4	19.2	17.5

Lack of Jobs or Business Opportunities. Those mentioning jobs and business opportunities as one of the worst things about the Omaha area were most likely to be aged 35-64 or to have some college education.

Of particular interest is that jobs and business opportunities was the only category listed among the top-10 best things, the top-10 worst things, and the top-10 priority problems to address. This item ranked third on all three lists with 25.6 percent claiming it as best, 27.6 percent citing it as worst, and 34.0 percent indicating it as a top priority problem to address.

Crime. No appreciable differences were noted across age groups, in the crime category. Respondents without high school degrees (29.4 percent) were more than twice as likely to mention crime as those with high school degrees (13.6 percent), and almost twice as likely to mention crime as those with some college (15.9 percent).

Most Important Problems to Address

Consistent with the top worst things mentioned, drugs and gangs ranked at the top of priority problems to be addressed by the Omaha area. However, as shown in table 13, drugs (47.6 percent) ranked significantly higher than gangs (37.2 percent) as a problem to be addressed. Lack of jobs or business opportunities (34.0 percent), youth needs (23.6 percent), and homelessness (19.9 percent) complete the top-five priority problems list.

As was the case with the best and worst aspects of the Omaha area, North Omaha respondents share some priorities with metropolitan respondents. At the same time, priorities differ. For example, within the metropolitan sample crime (19.6 percent) and high taxes (18.7 percent) were among the five most frequently mentioned priorities. These same categories were ranked sixth and nineteenth (see table 13) by the north Omaha respondents. Replacing these two issues in the latter

sample were lack of jobs or business opportunities (34.0 percent) and youth needs (23.6 percent).

The remaining five issues of the top-10 priority problems, are as follows: crime, 17.8 percent; supply and cost of housing, 15.2 percent; quality of schools, 11.0 percent; law enforcement, 9.9 percent; and street conditions, 7.3 percent.

Variations in Perceptions of the Problems Needing to be Addressed in the Omaha Area

The results of comparisons of the top-five problems by demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in table 14.

Drugs. With the exception of those aged 65 or older, more than 40 percent of respondents across all demographic groups viewed drugs as an important problem. In addition, percentages noted across demographic characteristics are very close to that of all respondents mentioning drugs as a priority problem (47.6 percent; see table 13).

Gangs. Almost all demographic characteristics show some significant differences when viewing gangs as a problem. Pronounced differences are seen between those aged 18-34 (55.7 percent) and respondents 35-64 (27.2 percent) or 65 and older (25.6 percent). In addition, those with high school degrees or less and those with household incomes under \$20,000 were more likely to view gangs as a problem.

Table 13 - North Omaha Respondents' Views of the Priority Problems the Omaha Area Should Address

Rank	Category	Percent
1	Drugs	47.6
2	Gangs	37.2
3	Lack of jobs or business opportunities	34.0
4	Youth needs	23.6
5	Homelessness	19.9
6	Crime	17.8
7	Supply and cost of housing	15.2
8	Quality of schools	11.0
9	Law enforcement	9.9
10	Street conditions	7.3
11	Elderly needs	6.8
12	Race relations	4.7
12	Urban redevelopment/rehabilitation	4.7
14	Quality of government	4.2
14	Public housing	4.2
16	Discipline in schools	3.1
17	Attracting new business	2.6
18	Sports and recreational programs	2.1
19	Quality of the environment	1.6
19	High taxes	1.6
21	Street congestion	1.0
21	More cultural activities	1.0
23	Public transportation	0.5

Table 14 - Percentage of North Omaha Respondents Mentioning Top Five Priority Problems for the Omaha Area by Demographic Characteristics

	Age			Education			Income		Sex	
	18-34 (n=70)	35-64 (n=81)	65 + (n=39)	No High School Degree (n=48)	High School Degree (n=59)	At Least Some College (n=84)	Under \$20,000 (n=106)	\$20,000 or More (n=57)	Male (n=78)	Female (n=113)
Drugs	57.1	45.7	35.9	54.2	52.5	40.5	47.2	43.8	50.0	46.0
Gangs	55.7	27.2	25.6	47.9	44.1	26.2	43.4	24.6	30.8	41.6
Lack of jobs or business opportunities	18.6	48.1	33.3	27.1	33.9	38.1	31.1	40.4	43.6	27.4
Youth needs	25.7	25.9	15.4	14.6	16.9	33.3	23.6	29.8	21.8	24.8
Homelessness	25.7	21.0	7.7	16.7	23.7	19.0	17.9	26.3	17.9	21.2

Lack of Jobs or Business Opportunities. The largest difference in the percentages of persons mentioning jobs and business opportunities can be found in the age and gender categories. Respondents aged 35-64 (48.1 percent) were more than twice as likely to view jobs and business opportunities as a priority problem than those aged 18-34 (18.6 percent). Men and women also showed significant differences, with respective percentages of 43.6 and 27.4.

Youth Needs. The selection of youth needs as a priority problem varied little by respondent characteristics, with the exception of education. Persons with some college education viewed youth needs as a problem almost twice as often as those with either high school degrees or less. In addition, respondents aged 65 or over viewed youth needs as a problem slightly less than those either 18-34 or 35-64.

Homelessness. With the exception of persons aged 65 or older, the mention of homelessness as a priority problem varied little across demographic characteristics. Those 65 and older were significantly less likely to mention homelessness as a problem.

Citizen Evaluation of Services, Facilities and Programs

The Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 included a number of questions regarding residents' views of Omaha area services and facilities. Included in the survey were daily needs and services (garbage collection, shopping facilities, and electrical, gas and water service); public safety services; streets and transportation; services and programs for special groups (senior citizens, teenagers, the homeless, and child care); education; and leisure time services (cultural events, recreation programs, and parks and playgrounds).

This section summarizes North Omahan's views of selected services, facilities and programs in the Omaha area.

The Value of Citizen Feedback

Citizen feedback can be an important part of any effort to better understand public services. It provides a consumer perspective about services for which, in many cases, the consumer has no alternative provider choice. In fact, the collection of certain qualitative information about public services virtually requires citizen surveys.

If collected properly, this information can be far more representative of community feelings than complaint data or the sometimes limited personal observations of government employees and elected officials. Such people tend to hear most from those who are dissatisfied or who represent special interests. Surveys tap the opinions of both the dissatisfied and the satisfied. This latter group is especially important, as research shows that only about 20 percent of an area's residents will ever contact their local government for any reason at all.

While citizen-based assessments of public services are important to use, they are only one indicator of service effectiveness and quality. The views of businesses, for example, must also be considered since many public services are primarily consumed by businesses rather than individuals. Other sources of information, such as administrative records on citizen complaints, trained observer ratings, and efficiency measures, need to be considered as well.

On balance, however, performance-based information drawn from a citizen survey—such as that provided by the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990—is generally much clearer than are some of the more commonly used service measures, such as park acres mowed per dollar of funding or person-hours of labor, the degree of street smoothness as measured by a roughometer, and service response-time information. So strong is the case for citizen feedback that one recent study of local government use of citizen surveys found that over one-

half of responding cities were using surveys as one indicator of the quality of local government services.³

Perhaps the most important consideration is that citizen-based indicators of service performance have the potential to increase our understanding of what and how various governmental and non-governmental agencies are doing. This, in the long run, can prompt more citizen involvement in local public affairs.

Measuring Service Satisfaction

The Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 asked the North Omaha respondents to indicate how satisfied they were with various services, facilities and programs. Each person was also asked how important the service, program or facility was to him or her. Thus, for 33 separate items, each person was first asked "How important is [each item] to you?" Response choices were "very important," "somewhat important," "slightly important," and "not important." Next, each respondent was asked "How satisfied are you with [each item] at the present time?" Response categories for this question were "very satisfied," "somewhat satisfied," "somewhat dissatisfied," and "very dissatisfied."

Responses to these two questions were charted on a 16-cell table divided into four major quadrants (see figure 1). Each response was located in one of the four cells—A, B, C or D—according to the satisfaction/dissatisfaction and importance/unimportance levels reported by each respondent.

As figure 1 shows, Cell A represents responses indicating satisfaction with a service that is not important to the respondent. Responses indicating satisfaction with an important service are assigned to Cell B. Cell C indicates dissatisfaction with a service that is not important, while Cell D represents responses of dissatisfaction with an important service.

While the classification approach presented in figure 1 reduces a complex set of citizen-based evaluations into a limited number of fields, it provides a clear perspective of major differences in citizen assessments of services. Responses that fall in Cell B, for example, can provide an overall feel for how well a particular service, facility or program is doing since that cell represents respondents who are satisfied with a service that is important to them. Cell D, on the other hand, can be seen as a "red flag"; responses in this cell represent con-

sumers dissatisfied with a service that is important to them. If not addressed, such dissatisfaction could produce a backlash. The proportion of responses in Cells A and C can be viewed as an indicator of the extent to which respondents attach little importance to a service.

Service, Facility and Program Ratings

Table 15 presents the percentage of responses in each of the four rating categories for 23 of the 33 services contained in the survey. (The remaining 10 covered important aspects of the overall quality of life, such as housing availability and price, and job and economic opportunities, and were examined in earlier sections of this report).

Looking first at Cell B, which contains responses indicating satisfaction with a service that is important, one sees that fire protection is rated highest with 96.4 percent, and activities for teenagers is rated lowest with 26.8 percent.

In addition to fire protection, three items—emergency rescue service, garbage collection, and electrical services—have 90 percent or more of their responses in Cell B. Three services have between 80 and 89.9 percent of responses in Cell B: gas and water service, elementary schools and colleges and universities.

Cell D was characterized as a potential "red flag" cell. Almost one-half of the items—11 of 23—had more than one out of four responses falling in this category. Included in this group were: police protection (30.2 percent), smoothness of streets and roads (63.3 percent), activities for senior citizens (27.8 percent), activities for teenagers (72.1 percent), programs for needy citizens (56.1 percent), help for homeless (68.9 percent), availability of child care services (43.7 percent), quality of child care services (40.4 percent), cultural events (27.9 percent), recreation programs and activities (32.8 percent), and parks and playgrounds (29.4 percent).

Public Safety

Overall, the three services contained in this category have among the

Figure 1. Four Importance/Satisfaction Categories for Citizen Evaluation of Selected Services, Facilities and Programs

		Importance to Respondent			
		Not Important	Slightly Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Satisfaction of Respondent	Very Satisfied	A		B	
	Somewhat Satisfied				
	Somewhat Dissatisfied	C		D	
	Very Dissatisfied				

Table 15 - North Omahans' Satisfaction and Importance Ratings for Selected Services, Facilities and Programs

Service/Facility/Program	Percentage of Responses in Category*			
	A (Satisfied, Unimportant)	B (Satisfied, Important)	C (Dissatisfied, Unimportant)	D (Dissatisfied, Important)
Public Safety:				
• Police protection (N=199)	1.5	66.8	1.5	30.2
• Fire protection (N=195)	.5	96.4	--	3.1
• Emergency rescue service (N=192)	.5	92.2	--	7.3
Category average	.8	85.2	.5	13.5
Streets/Transportation:				
• Public transportation (N=170)	10.0	66.5	1.8	21.8
• Smoothness of streets and roads (N=199)	.5	34.2	2.0	63.3
• Traffic engineering (such as traffic light timing, placement, and so on) (N=198)	2.5	72.7	1.0	23.7
Category average	4.3	57.8	1.6	35.3
Daily Needs and Services:				
• Garbage collection (N=197)	1.0	95.9	--	3.0
• Electrical service (N=199)	--	95.0	--	5.0
• Shopping facilities for daily needs (N=198)	1.5	77.3	1.0	20.2
• Gas and water service (N=198)	.5	88.9	.5	10.1
Category average	.8	89.2	.4	9.6
Education:				
• Elementary schools (N=184)	.5	81.5	--	17.9
• Junior high schools (N=172)	.6	77.9	--	21.5
• Senior high schools (N=171)	.6	76.0	--	23.4
• Colleges & universities (N=172)	--	87.2	--	12.8
Category average	.4	80.6	--	18.9
Special Groups:				
• Activities for senior citizens (N=162)	1.9	69.8	.6	27.8
• Activities for teenagers (N=179)	1.1	26.8	--	72.1
• Programs for needy citizens (N=180)	--	43.3	.6	56.1
• Help for homeless (N=183)	--	31.1	--	68.9
• Availability of child care services (N=151)	3.3	51.7	1.3	43.7
• Quality of child care services (N=146)	2.7	56.2	.7	40.4
Category average	1.5	46.5	.5	51.5
Leisure Time:				
• Cultural events (N=179)	2.8	68.2	1.1	27.9
• Recreation programs and activities (N=186)	2.7	63.4	1.1	32.8
• Parks and playgrounds (N=194)	3.1	66.0	1.5	29.4
Category average	2.9	65.9	1.2	30.0

*A: Respondents were somewhat or very satisfied with services that were slightly or not important to them.

B: Respondents were somewhat or very satisfied with services that were somewhat or very important to them.

C: Respondents were somewhat or very dissatisfied with services that were slightly or not important to them.

D: Respondents were somewhat or very dissatisfied with services that were somewhat or very important to them.

highest ratings (85.2 percent category average in Cell B) of the 23 items presented in Table 15. As might be expected, services in this category are seen as important by almost all of those responding.

Police protection was judged less positively than fire and emergency medical services. This is comparable to results from studies conducted nationally. *Looking at Cell D, roughly 1 out of every 3 North Omaha respondents said police protection was important to them, but that they were dissatisfied with the service. This contrasts sharply with the metropolitan sample where 11.3 percent of the respondents were dissatisfied.* Lowest ratings were given by those age 18-34 years old, while highest ratings were given by those age 65 and over.

Streets and Transportation

After the special groups category of services, streets and transportation received the lowest overall ratings. For the three services in this category, just over one-half of the North Omaha respondents said they were satisfied and that the services were important. Over one-third said they were dissatisfied and that the services were important to them.

Traffic engineering (72.7 percent in Cell B) and public transportation (66.5 percent in Cell B) were rated highest, and smoothness of streets was rated lowest (34.2 percent in Cell B).

These ratings are not substantially different from those found in the metropolitan sample. One area where there are differences is public transportation. *North Omaha respondents are less likely than Omaha metropolitan area residents, generally, to say that public transportation is unimportant.* For example, 11.8 percent of the North Omaha sample said public transportation was unimportant (see Cells A and C); this contrasts to 33.5 percent of the metropolitan sample. North Omaha respondents are also more likely than respondents from the metropolitan area to say they are satisfied with public transportation (66.5 and 49.2 percent, respectively).

While street smoothness and traffic engineering evaluations did not vary across age, education, income and gender groups, ratings of public trans-

portation varied with respondent age. Among 18-34 year olds, 75.8 percent were in Cell B, while among those 65 and older, 59.4 percent were in Cell B.

Daily Needs and Services

Items in this category received the highest overall ratings of the 23 services and programs contained in table 15. Among the four items in this category—garbage collection, electrical service, shopping facilities for daily needs, and gas and water service—only daily shopping facilities had less than 80 percent of the respondents in Cell B (77.3 percent satisfied; 20.2 percent dissatisfied). *The proportion of the North Omaha sample indicating dissatisfaction with daily shopping facilities is 5 times higher than the level of dissatisfaction reported by respondents to the metropolitan survey.*

Older respondents were more likely to say shopping facilities were important, and that they were dissatisfied (31.0 percent). In addition, North Omahans with education beyond the high school level gave lower ratings (25.9 percent dissatisfied).

Education

After daily needs and public safety, education had the largest proportion of North Omahans' responses falling in Cell B. Four items were included in this category. Elementary schools and colleges and universities are two of seven services to have 80 percent or more of responses in Cell B. Junior and senior high schools received somewhat lower ratings, but they still received good ratings from more than three-fourths (77.9 and 76.0 percent, respectively) of those responding. *Although North Omaha respondents rated each of the education items lower than metropolitan sample respondents, the differences are not statistically significant.*

North Omaha parents were only slightly less satisfied with education services than non-parents. For K-12 levels, however, respondents with education beyond the high school level were from 2 to 5 times more likely to be dissatisfied than those with less than a high school education. No differences in satisfaction with education

were observed across age, income and gender groups.

Special Groups

As indicated earlier, this category of services and programs received the lowest overall rating, with just over one-half (51.5 percent in Cell D) of the North Omaha respondents saying they were dissatisfied and that these services were important to them. Among the six items contained in this category, activities for senior citizens was rated highest (69.8 percent in Cell B), and activities for teenagers (26.8 percent in Cell B) was rated lowest.

The proportion of the North Omaha sample indicating dissatisfaction with the special services items was roughly 50 percent greater than was the case for the metropolitan sample. The difference was the greatest for the availability of child care, with 43.7 percent of the North Omaha sample and 24.4 percent of the metropolitan sample indicating they were dissatisfied and the service was important.

Generally, respondents with higher levels of education or income, or who are older, expressed greater dissatisfaction with services and programs in this category. A particularly sharp difference exists with activities for teenagers. Among respondents aged 18-34, just 15.6 percent said they were dissatisfied and that the item was important; among those over age 65, the comparable percentage was 81.3. Sharp differences also exist across respondents with different levels of education. For example, 85.1 percent of respondents with a high school education or greater said they were dissatisfied with activities for teenagers and that this was important, while just 15.6 percent of those with less than a high school education indicated dissatisfaction.

Leisure Time

North Omahans' ratings of these services were fairly uniform, with roughly 2 out of 3 responding that they were satisfied and that the service was important. Recreation programs and activities received the lowest rating, with 32.8 percent indicating they were dissatisfied, and that this was important. For each of the three services in

this category, the proportion of North Omahans saying they were dissatisfied was at least twice that of the metropolitan sample. For cultural events, the ratio was almost 3 to 1.

As was the case for other categories of services, ratings differed across respondents' education levels. For both cultural events and recreation programs and activities, persons with higher levels of education (high school or more) were less satisfied.

Profile of the Labor Force

Jobs play an important role in the lives of people and in the community. Jobs are important to people because of the income provided to satisfy needs and wants. Jobs are important to the community because through them goods and services are produced for the benefit of others.

Several federal and state agencies regularly publish statistics designed to help describe area labor markets. Generally, these statistics are published more frequently and in greater detail for large geographic areas than for small ones. At the national level, for example, the government publishes monthly labor force data by age, gender, race, occupation, and industry. At the county level, the government publishes only monthly estimates of the total number of employed and unemployed persons together with the unemployment rate.

For small geographic areas such as the seven North Omaha census tracts covered in this report, the only government labor statistics come from the U.S. Census taken once every ten years.

The absence of detailed, timely labor statistics at the local level can make it difficult for local leaders to fully assess changes in an area's labor market, or to develop plans to address citizen needs. One of the objectives of the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 was to help fill the need for detailed labor market information at the local level. To do this, the survey included a

series of questions about the respondent's job situation. Many of the questions were patterned after those the federal government uses to measure the labor force at the national level. This was done so that the resulting labor force measures would be as comparable as possible with those published by government sources.

The findings that follow can serve at least four purposes. First, they can be used to provide the community with a better picture of the minority labor force in North Omaha. Second, they can be compared with the findings of

the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 metropolitan sample to identify similarities and differences between the North Omaha minority community and the three-county area generally. Third, they can serve as the basis for study of change in the labor force over time as the survey is repeated in future years. Finally, they can serve to help focus the efforts of others interested in better tracking the labor market and improving job opportunities in the community.

Labor Force Concepts Used In This Section

People's job situations vary greatly. Some have full-time jobs. Others have only part-time jobs—some by choice, others because they cannot find full-time work. Some hold temporary jobs while others have permanent jobs. Yet other people hold multiple jobs. People may have their own business or work for someone else, and they might have just one job or several. Some do not have jobs at all because they cannot find work. Others, such as students, homemakers, or retired persons, may choose not to have jobs outside the home. People bring different levels of skill and training to the job market, as well as different interests and aptitudes. The variations are almost endless.

To study an area's labor market, it is necessary to have some method of classifying all of these numerous different job situations into a manageable number of groups. Government labor force statistics do this by classifying all persons aged 16 and older into one of three general groups—employed, unemployed, and not in the labor force. The government classifies as employed people who, during a given week,

- do any work at all for pay or profit
- do 15 or more hours of unpaid work for a family business
- are temporarily absent from work because of illness, bad weather, vacation, or labor-management dispute.

The government classifies as unemployed people who do not fit into the employed category above and:

- have looked for work in the last four weeks and are available for work (except for temporary illness)
- are on temporary layoff
- are waiting to report to a new job within the next 30 days.

People who are neither employed nor unemployed according to the definitions above are classified into the third group: not in the labor force.

The first two groups (employed and unemployed) taken together is called the labor force. The labor force participation rate is the percentage of all persons aged 16 and older in the labor force. The unemployment rate is the percentage of the labor force that is unemployed.

The Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 used these same concepts so that the resulting labor force measures would be as comparable as possible with those from other sources. Two minor differences prevent absolute comparability between labor force measures from the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 and those from the government. First, the Omaha Conditions Survey measured persons aged 18 and older rather than 16 and older. Second, the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 included military personnel. Military personnel are not ordinarily counted in labor force statistics at the local level, but they are counted at the national level.

Labor Force Participation

The labor force participation rate for minorities aged 18 and older in the seven North Omaha census tracts is 58.1 percent (see figure 2).

The labor force participation rate for the three-county area of the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 metropolitan sample is 72.9 percent. *Among the possible reasons for the lower participation rate in North Omaha — it is only about three-fourths that of the metro area — are: higher proportions of discouraged workers; demographic characteristics of residents such as higher proportion of older, retired citizens; discrimination; the lack of jobs in the area; and inadequate transportation.*

Unemployment

Ideally, the number and types of jobs available in a given area would precisely match the number and skills of people available for work in that same area. In reality, there is always some degree of mismatch between an area's labor demand and its labor supply as factors such as training and experience, transportation availability, the geographic proximity of jobs, and discrimination enter into the mixes of those persons in the labor force who

are either working or are unemployed, but available for work.

While the exact dynamics in the North Omaha sample area are not clear, it is apparent that the available labor force would exceed that available in most other parts of Omaha with a comparable size.

For example, the unemployment rate (percentage of unemployed in the labor force) in North Omaha is 12.2 percent (see figure 3). This rate is almost four times that of the 3.4 percent rate found among the metropolitan sample.

The unemployed in North Omaha are predominantly young. All of the unemployed survey respondents were between the ages of 18 and 34. There are no significant differences in the unemployment rate by education or gender.

Of those respondents who are unemployed, 7.1 percent have never held jobs before, another 28.6 percent are on temporary layoff from their jobs, and the remaining 64.3 percent have held jobs within the last year.

Clearly, if the unemployment rate is used as a measure of the economic well-being of the residents of an area, the North Omaha sample respondents are much less well-off than most metropolitan area residents. This was borne out in the income profile presented earlier in this report. At the

same time, the unemployment data suggest that there is a sizeable labor force available for work.

Discouraged and Underemployed Workers

Besides the unemployed, there are two other groups which should be measured to gain a more complete picture of an area's labor force. The first — discouraged workers — comprises part of the people who are classified as not in the labor force. The second — underemployed — comprises part of the people who are classified as employed. The Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 measured both these groups to more completely describe the area labor market.

Discouraged Workers

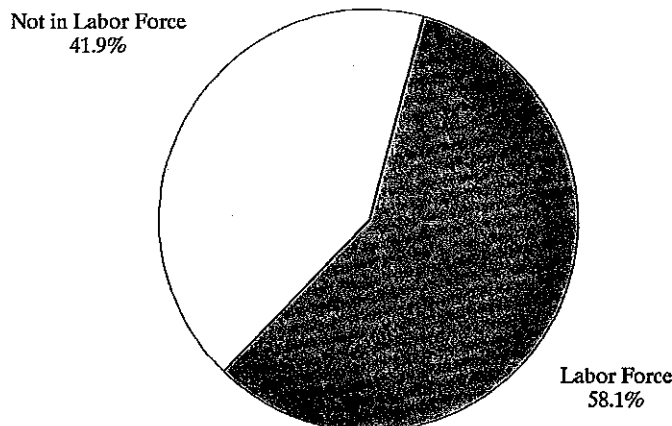
Recall that according to the official government definitions above, a person without a job must have actively looked for work within the last four weeks to be classified as unemployed. Persons without jobs who have not looked for work in the last four weeks are classified as not in the labor force. There are two main reasons why people without jobs might not have looked for work in the last four weeks:

1. They do not want jobs (retired persons, homemakers, and students, for example)
2. They do want jobs, but they have given up actively looking because they do not believe any jobs are available for them, for whatever the reason.

The not-in-labor-force category, then, includes not only people without jobs who do not want them such as retirees, homemakers, and students, but also people without jobs who do want them but have given up looking for work. Economists call this second group discouraged workers, meaning that while they want jobs they have become discouraged and have quit looking. (The "workers" part of the name may be misleading since by definition these persons are available for work but do not have jobs.)

Because discouraged workers are classified as not in the labor force, the government does not count them in

Figure 2. Labor Force Status: North Omaha Survey Respondents Aged 18 and Older



the calculation of an area's unemployment rate. Two areas, therefore, could have exactly the same size labor force and unemployment rate, but different numbers of discouraged workers. The incidence of discouraged workers among those not in the labor force is an additional indicator of an area's economic well being. Discouraged workers also represent another group, besides the unemployed, of potential labor for new or expanding business.

The Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 asked those respondents found to be not in the labor force if they wanted a job now and if they were available for work. Those answering yes to both questions were classified as discouraged workers. *Using this approach, it was found that 9.6 percent of persons not in the labor force (4.0 percent of all persons) are discouraged workers (see figure 3).*

This is four times higher than the metropolitan sample where 2.4 percent of those not in the labor force are discouraged workers.

As was the case with the unemployed, the incidence of discouraged workers is higher among the young. Of persons aged 18 to 34 not in the labor force, 38.5 percent are discouraged workers. Among those aged 35 to 64 not in the labor force, 9.4 percent are discouraged workers. The percentage of persons aged 65 and older who are

discouraged workers is probably extremely small since none of the survey respondents in this age group are discouraged workers.

There are no significant differences in the incidence of discouraged workers by education or gender.

All the discouraged workers surveyed have held jobs in the past, but their labor force experience is much less recent than those in the unemployed category. Only 25.0 percent have held jobs within the last year, and another 25.0 percent have held jobs in the last two years. The most recent work experience for the remaining 50.0 percent was sometime between three and twelve years ago.

Underemployment

The incidence of underemployment is yet another indicator of economic well being as well as potential labor availability. People with jobs can be underemployed both in terms of hours worked and in terms of mismatch between their skills and their jobs. Again, recall that the official government definition of employed includes everybody who does any work at all for pay during a given week. If a person works only one hour, he or she is classified as employed the same as a person who works forty or more hours. The employed classification alone also

offers no information on the degree of match between people's skills and the type of work they do. For example, a skilled tool and die maker who is only able to find work as a laborer is counted as employed the same as if he or she were able to find work making tools and dies.

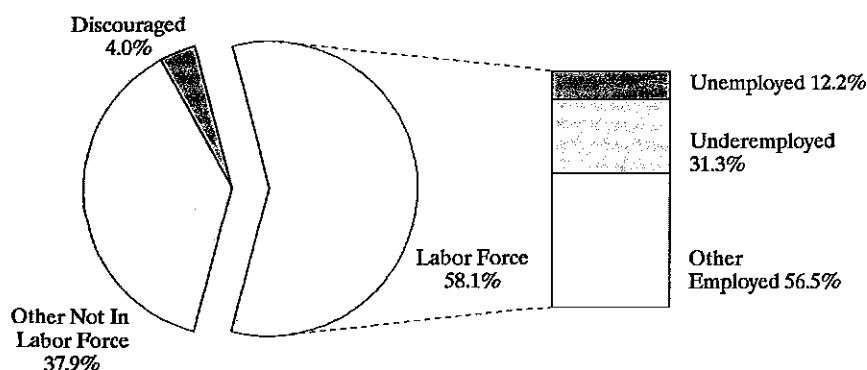
The Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 measured underemployment by asking respondents who were employed how many hours per week they usually worked. Those who said they usually worked fewer than 35 hours per week (the official government threshold for part time) were asked how many hours per week they would like to work. Respondents working part time who said they wanted an additional five or more hours per week were classified as underemployed.

All employed respondents, regardless of hours worked, were also asked a question dealing with the match between their skills and their jobs. The question was, "Sometimes persons have to settle for jobs they are overqualified for because nothing better is available. Are you one of those persons?" While clearly a subjective measure, it at least gives some indication of how people perceive their jobs in relation to their skills and training. Those who answered yes to this question were also classified as underemployed.

It was found that 7.0 percent of the labor force (4.0 percent of all persons) is underemployed in terms of hours worked. An additional 24.3 percent of people in the labor force (14.1 percent of all persons) work full time but consider themselves overqualified for their jobs. Overall, 31.3 percent of the labor force (18.2 percent of all persons) is underemployed by these definitions (see figure 3).

Underemployment in the North Omaha sample is about one and a half times that of the metropolitan sample. In the metropolitan sample, 2.5 percent of the labor force is underemployed in terms of hours worked, and an additional 19.2 percent of people in the labor force work full time but consider themselves overqualified for their jobs. Overall, 21.7 percent of the metropolitan sample labor force is underemployed.

Figure 3. Employment Status of North Omaha Survey Respondents



Overall Labor Situation

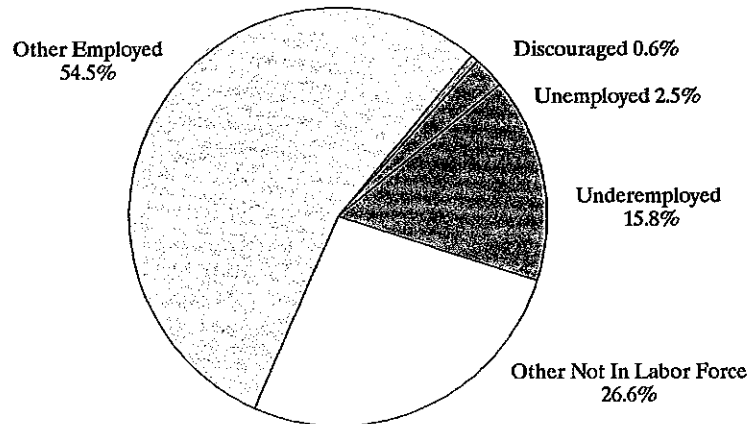
By subdividing the not-in-labor force category into discouraged worker and other not in labor force groups, and the employed category into underemployed and other employed groups, a more complete picture of the area labor market emerges.

The three groups discussed above (unemployed, discouraged workers, and underemployed) can be thought of as people whose job situations differ in a significant way from what they would like them to be. Were new jobs to become available in the area, these people would be the most likely to apply for them. People in the other two groups (other not in labor force, and other employed) have job situations that in general match their wants and expectations. These individuals would be less likely to apply for any new jobs that were to become available.

Figure 4 shows what percentage of all respondents aged 18 and older living in North Omaha falls into each of the five groups.

In an ideal labor market, people's job situations would not differ greatly from what they would like them to be since the supply of and demand for workers would match. Under ideal conditions the proportion of un-

Figure 5. Summary of Employment Status - 3 County Area



employed would be considerably smaller than illustrated in figure 4, the only unemployed being those voluntarily between jobs or just entering the labor market for the first time. Discouraged workers and the underemployed would not exist at all in an ideal labor market; these people would find suitable jobs and therefore be in the other employed category.

Figure 5 shows what percentage of all persons aged 18 and older living in

Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington counties falls into each of the five groups. Compared to the metropolitan sample, the North Omaha sample has almost four times the incidence of unemployment, four times the incidence of discouraged workers, and one and a half times the incidence of underemployed.

Additional Aspects of the Employed Labor Force

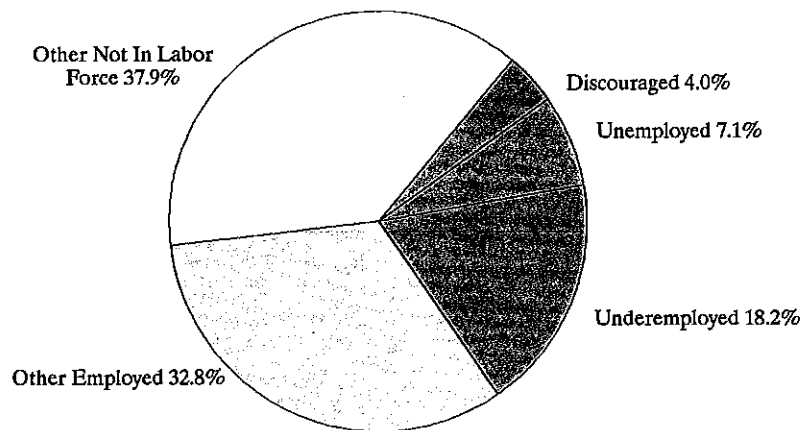
Besides measuring the incidence of unemployment, discouraged workers, and underemployment, the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 also looked at specific aspects of the employed labor force. These aspects are multiple-job holders, the self-employed, temporary workers, part-time workers, and earnings.

Multiple-Job Holders

People hold more than one job for a variety of reasons. Some are unable to find suitable full-time work and instead take two part-time jobs. Persons with full-time jobs may take second jobs to increase their income. Still others might operate their own businesses in addition to working for someone else.

Of all North Omaha respondents 18 and older with jobs, 13.3 percent hold more than one.

Figure 4. Summary of Employment Status of North Omahans



The incidence of multiple-job holders in the North Omaha sample is almost twice that found in the metropolitan sample, where it was 6.7 percent.

Self-Employed

The extent of self-employment and the degree to which it changes over time can serve as an indicator of an area's business climate.

In North Omaha, 14.3 percent of minority respondents with jobs are self-employed. The remaining 85.7 percent of the employed labor force works for someone else. (Multiple-job holders who are both self-employed and work for someone else are classified according to the job that produces the greatest earnings.)

This is not significantly different from the metropolitan sample where 11.6 percent of those with jobs are self-employed.

Temporary Workers

Of those employed persons who work for someone else (are not self-employed), 16.7 percent hold temporary jobs. This is substantially higher than the metropolitan sample where only 6.7 percent of employed persons are temporary workers.

Part-Time Workers

As noted earlier, the government defines part-time work as fewer than 35 hours per week. Of those who are employed, 27.6 percent work part-time. About 72.4 percent of part-time workers do so by choice; the remaining 27.6 percent would like to work additional hours.

The percentage of the employed working part time in the North Omaha sample is about twice that of the metropolitan sample. In the metropolitan sample 14.6 percent work part time.

Earnings

Five percent of employed respondents in North Omaha earn \$30,000 or more per year. Another 20.0 percent earns between \$20,000 and \$29,999. Almost half (46.0 percent) earns from \$10,000 to \$19,999, and 29.0 percent earns less than \$10,000 per year.

There was no significant difference in earnings by age. There were differences in earnings by education and gender, however. Earnings increase as education increases. Most of those without a high school education (70.0 percent) earn less than \$10,000 per year. Most of those with a high school diploma only (86.4 percent) earn \$19,999 per year or under. Most of those with at least some college (83.0 percent) earn between \$10,000 and \$29,999 per year.

Looking at gender, 11.9 percent of the male respondents are in the highest earnings category (\$30,000 or more) compared to none of the female respondents. There is no difference between men and women in the second earnings category (\$20,000 to \$29,999). In the third category (\$10,000 to \$19,999) are 51.7 percent of the women and only 38.1 percent of the men. There is again no difference between men and women in the final earnings category (less than \$10,000 per year).

Low-Income Workers. In addition to aspects of the employed labor force discussed above, the job situation of people in low-income households was analyzed. For the purpose of this analysis, households reporting that the income of all adults together is less than \$15,000 per year are categorized as low income. Just over half (53.6 percent) of the households surveyed reported that they were in this category. Since many low income households consist of retired persons who are not in the labor force, data for respondents aged 65 and older were excluded. Labor force data for respondents aged 18 to 64 and household incomes under \$15,000 per year were then compared with data for persons of the same age group and annual household incomes of \$15,000 or more.

The labor force participation rate for persons aged 18 to 64 in low-income households is 55.1 percent. In households with incomes of \$15,000 and more, it is 90.9 percent. Some of this difference is attributable to a higher proportion of students in the low-income group.

Of all persons with jobs aged 18 to 64, about one in four (26.7 percent) work full time and have household in-

comes of less than \$15,000 per year. This is three times the percentage (7.8) of workers aged 18 to 64 in the metropolitan sample.

The unemployment rate is not significantly different for the two income groups, nor is the incidence of underemployment. The incidence of discouraged workers is different, however; all discouraged workers surveyed are in the low-income group.

Perceptions of Crime, Protective Measures, and Victimization in North Omaha

Questions in the crime portion of the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 covered four areas: (1) fear of crime; (2) perceptions of change in the crime situation; (3) measures taken by residents to protect themselves from crime; and (4) levels of victimization for certain property crimes.

Fear of Crime

Table 16 shows that those very worried about crime compose 68.0 percent of the North Omaha respondents in our sample, 23.5 percent of the respondents are a little worried, and 8.5 percent are not worried at all. *The proportion of North Omahan's saying they are very worried about crime is almost 50 percent higher than in the metropolitan area.*

Age, education, labor force status, and marital status have no effect upon

Table 16 -North Omahans' Responses to the Following Question: "Are you very worried, a little worried, or not at all worried about crime?"

	Number	Percentage
Very worried	136	68.0
A little worried	47	23.5
Not worried at all	17	8.5
Total	200	100.0

fear of crime. The level of the household income has, however, a significant effect: those with lower household incomes are more likely to be very worried about crime. Additionally, females are more likely than males to be worried about crime.

Perceptions of Change in the Crime Situation

Table 17 shows that those believing the Omaha Area's crime situation in the past few years had grown worse compose 83.5 percent of the North Omaha respondents in our sample (the comparable figure for the metropolitan sample was 73.8 percent). Fifteen percent of the respondents feel that the situation has remained the same or changed for the better.

Table 17 -North Omahans' Responses to the Following Question: "Has the crime situation in the Omaha area changed in the past few years for the better, has it remained about the same, or has it changed for the worse?"

	Number	Percentage
Changed for the better	9	4.5
Remained the same	21	10.5
Changed for the worse	167	83.5
Don't know	3	1.5
Total	200	100.0

Neither age, household income, education, labor force status, nor marital status affects the perception of change among the North Omaha respondents. However, females are 1.7 times as likely as males to feel that the crime situation has gotten worse in the past few years.

Measures Taken by North Omaha Residents to Protect Themselves from Crime

Several items of the survey looked into activities people take because of their concern about crime. Thirteen activities were presented to the respondents, and for each activity respondents were asked whether they do it now and whether they have done

it in the past. Table 18 shows that only in the case of keeping a dog for protection has the overall percentage of respondents taking this self-protective measure declined; for all other activities, the percentages increased.

Selected Demographic Factors and Self-Protective Measures

Table 19 provides an overall accounting of the currently used self-protective measures of North Omaha respondents broken down by selected demographic factors. The most influential demographic factor is age; in fact, it seems that age 50 is a watershed for several of the modes of self-protection. For instance, respondents in the younger age category, 18-49, are more inclined to leave lights on at night, walk with others in the neighborhood, carry mace, and to have taken other measures not specifically asked about. However, respondents 50 and over are more likely to keep a gun for protection and install special locks.

The level of household income affects the likelihood that the respondent will belong to a neighborhood crime watch. Specifically, households having incomes of \$20,000 or more are 1.5 times as likely as those having incomes under \$20,000 to belong to a neighborhood crime watch.

The sex of the respondent did influence the likelihood of using three self-protective measures: keeping a dog for protection; keeping a gun for

protection; and carrying mace or other repellent. Males are more likely than females to keep a dog for protection and keep a gun for protection. Females are more likely to carry mace or some other repellent.

Labor force status influenced the likelihood of keeping a dog for protection and of keeping a gun for protection. Those employed are more likely than those unemployed to keep a dog for protection. However, respondents who are not employed are twice as likely than those employed to keep a gun for protection.

Finally, married respondents are more likely than single respondents to notify neighbors when gone for an extended period of time. Alternatively, single respondents are more likely than married respondents to carry a weapon or other instrument for defense.

Victimization in the Omaha Area

In an attempt to gauge the level of crime in the United States, two main sources have evolved: the FBI's *Uniform Crime Reports* (UCR) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics' *National Crime Survey* (NCS). The UCR is an aggregation of law enforcement agency information that includes incidents of crime reported to police agencies. In the early 1970s, on the premise that much more crime occurs than is reported in the UCR, the NCS was in-

Table 18 -Percentage of North Omaha Area Residents Now Taking or Having Previously Taken Crime Preventing Actions.

	Percentage Now Taking the Action	Percentage Having Taken the Action in the Past
Lock residence at night	97.5	89.9
Let neighbors know if gone for an extended period	78.0	69.8
Keep residence lights on at night	67.5	55.5
Keep a dog for protection	30.0	34.5
Walk only with others in neighborhood at night	32.9	28.1
Keep a gun for protection	33.0	28.0
Have special locks installed	69.8	52.8
Carry weapon or other instrument for defense	13.0	8.0
Carry mace or other repellent	9.5	7.5
Have burglar alarm installed	25.5	18.5
Carry whistle on person or in car	12.6	8.5
Belong to neighborhood crime watch	33.5	26.5
Take other measures not previously mentioned	13.0	9.0

Table 19 - Percentage of North Omaha Respondents Currently Taking Self-Protective Measures by Selected Demographic Factors

	Lock Residence at Night	Notify Neighbors When Gone	Keep Lights On At Night	Keep a Dog	Walk With Others	Keep a Gun	
Total Sample	97.5	78.0	67.5	30.0	32.9	33.0	
Age:							
18-49	95.7	75.9	77.6**	33.6	44.2**	24.8**	
50 and over	100.0	80.7	53.0	25.3	16.2	45.8	
Household Income:							
Under \$20,000	98.2	80.2	67.7	31.5	34.4	38.5	
\$20,000 and over	96.5	77.2	68.4	24.6	30.2	28.1	
Education:							
High school degree or less	98.2	79.1	64.3	29.6	34.0	38.1	
At least some college	96.3	76.8	73.2	30.5	31.5	27.2	
Sex:							
Male	96.3	79.0	66.7	39.5**	28.9	48.8**	
Female	98.3	77.3	68.1	23.5	36.1	23.1	
Labor Force Status:							
Employed	97.0	80.2	71.3	37.6**	38.2	22.4**	
Not Employed	97.9	75.3	62.9	22.7	28.0	45.47	
Marital Status:							
Married	97.3	86.3**	64.4	27.4	31.3	38.4	
Single	97.6	72.8	69.6	32.0	34.6	31.1	
	Install Special Locks	Carry a Weapon	Carry Repellent	Install Burglar Alarm	Carry a Whistle	Belong to Crime Watch	Other
Total sample	69.8	13.0	9.5	25.5	12.6	33.5	13.0
Age:							
18-49	63.8**	16.8	13.8**	25.0	14.7	37.1	17.2**
50 and over	78.0	8.4	3.6	26.5	9.8	28.9	7.2
Household income:							
Under \$20,000	73.9	14.7	10.8	25.2	17.3	29.7**	12.6
\$20,000 and over	59.6	10.5	10.5	31.6	8.8	45.6	12.3
Education:							
High school degree or less	72.8	12.4	7.0	20.9	9.6	28.7	9.6
At least some college	65.9	13.6	12.2	32.9	15.9	41.5	17.1
Sex:							
Male	67.9	10.0	3.7**	22.2	7.4	30.9	9.9
Female	71.2	15.4	13.6	27.7	16.1	35.3	15.1
Labor force status:							
Employed	67.3	16.3	12.0	26.7	13.9	37.6	12.9
Not employed	74.0	10.3	7.2	23.7	11.5	29.9	13.4
Marital status:							
Married	63.0	6.8**	6.8	21.9	9.6	38.4	11.0
Single	73.4	17.2	11.2	27.2	14.5	30.4	14.4

**Differences across categories are statistically significant at the $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance.

initiated. The NCS is a large-scale, national survey periodically administered by the Bureau of the Census to 49,000 households encompassing 101,000 persons 12 years of age and over.

The present survey used four household screening questions from the National Crime Survey instrument. While these were drawn from the NCS, there were insufficient data obtained to enable a full comparison with published national findings for household and personal larceny. However, the burglary questions used in the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 are sufficient for such a comparison.

The NCS uses a complex method of working with respondents' inclination to "telescope" past criminal victimization experience to fit within the six-month time frame provided in the NCS questions. This results in overestimates of criminal victimization. One corrective aspect of the NCS method is repeatedly interviewing the same respondents over a given period of time. The danger of overestimates of victimization resulting from "telescoping" cannot be addressed in a one-shot design, such as that of the present survey.

Burglary: Completed

Table 20 shows that 14.5 percent of North Omaha respondents reported their households had been victimized by a break-in in the past six months. This compares to a rate of 7.6 percent for the metropolitan sample. None of the demographic factors influenced the likelihood that a person in the North Omaha area had been victimized by a completed burglary.

Burglary: Attempted

Table 20 shows that 14.1 percent of the respondents reported their households had been victimized by an attempted break-in in the past six months. This is also about twice the rate found for the metro area. Single residents were about 3.4 times as likely as married residents to have been victimized by an attempted break-in. None of the other demographic fac-

tors influenced the likelihood of this type of victimization.

Household Larceny: Objects Outside the Residence

Table 20 shows that 20.5 percent of the North Omaha respondents reported their households had had something stolen from outside the residence, such as a bicycle, garden hose, garden furniture, etc., in the past six months. None of the demographic factors influenced the likelihood that a person in the Omaha area had been victimized by this type of household larceny.

Personal Larceny

Table 20 shows that 7.0 percent of respondents had something stolen from themselves or from a household member while staying at a temporary location, such as a friend's or relative's home, a hotel or motel, or a vacation home. Younger respondents, 18-49 years of age, were more likely to have

been victimized by a personal larceny while not at home. The remaining demographic factors had no influence upon the likelihood of victimization by this criminal act among the respondents.

Endnotes

¹For more detail on the survey's sample design see, "Survey Methodology," *Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990, Final Report Series*. Center for Public Affairs Research, University of Nebraska at Omaha, 1990.

²Findings from the metropolitan sample are summarized in the following reports: "Opinions About Current Issues;" "Citizens Look at the Best and Worst of the Omaha Area;" "Labor Force Profile;" "Citizen Evaluation of Services, Facilities and Programs;" "Outlook on the Future, Quality of Life, Employment, and Housing;" and "Crime in the Omaha Area: Perceptions, Protective Measures, and Victimization"

³David R. Morgan. 1984. *Managing Urban America*. 2nd edition. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company; 160.

Table 20 - North Omahans' Victimization for Selected Property Crimes.

	Percentage of Victimized Respondents			
	Household Burglary Completed	Household Burglary Attempted	Household Larceny (Object Outside Residence)	Personal Larceny (While Not at Home)
Total sample	14.5	14.1	20.5	7.0
Age:				
18-49	13.8	15.5	23.3	11.2 **
50 and over	14.5	11.0	16.9	1.2
Household income:				
Under \$20,000	15.3	15.5	20.7	8.1
\$20,000 and over	14.0	12.3	24.6	7.0
Education:				
High school degree or less	13.0	12.2	20.9	5.2
At least some college	17.1	17.3	20.7	9.8
Sex:				
Male	13.6	12.3	21.0	4.9
Female	15.1	15.3	20.2	8.4
Labor Force Status:				
Employed	16.8	17.0	25.7	8.9
Not employed	12.4	10.3	15.5	5.2
Marital Status:				
Married	12.3	5.5 **	16.4	2.7
Single	15.2	18.5	23.2	9.6

**Differences across categories are statistically significant at the $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance.

About the Omaha Conditions Survey

The Omaha Conditions Survey is part of an initiative at the Center for Public Affairs Research to monitor and improve the processes operating in Nebraska's urban areas by collecting quality information and making it accessible to those who need it. It is one component of the Nebraska Urban Conditions Research Program, which focuses on planning for the future in four key areas: economic and social conditions; minority conditions; social service delivery systems; and small town conditions.

Through the Omaha Conditions Survey, the Center for Public Affairs Research will annually gather data from a random sample of 800 persons in Douglas, Sarpy and Washington counties in Nebraska. In addition, a smaller sample of 200 individuals living in sub-areas of Omaha will be interviewed each year.

Each year's survey will focus on the public's perception of the quality of life in the Omaha area; satisfaction with community services, programs and facilities; and demographic features. In addition to these items, each annual survey will focus on a special topic such as employment and labor force experiences, health care, crime, or environmental concerns.

See the box at right for information on reports covering special topics from the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990.

Interested in Receiving Additional Reports from the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990?

Write or call the Center for Public Affairs Research, Peter Kiewit Conference Center, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182; (402) 595-2311 for one or more of the following reports:

- Survey Methodology
- Outlook on the Future, Quality of Life, Employment, and Housing
- Opinions About Current Issues
- Labor Force Profile
- Citizen Evaluation of Services, Facilities and Programs
- Citizens Look at the Best and Worst of the Omaha Area
- Crime in the Omaha Area: Perceptions, Protective Measures, and Victimization

Published by the Center for Public Affairs Research (formerly Center for Applied Urban Research) and mailed free upon request. Copyright 1990 © Center for Public Affairs Research. All rights reserved. No part of this pub-

lication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (photocopying, electronic, mechanical, recording, or other) without the prior written permission of the copyright holder.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
Delbert D. Weber, Chancellor

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
AND COMMUNITY SERVICE
David W. Hinton, Dean

CENTER FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS
RESEARCH
Russell L. Smith, Director
Robert F. Blair, Research Associate
Joyce Carson, Word Processing Specialist

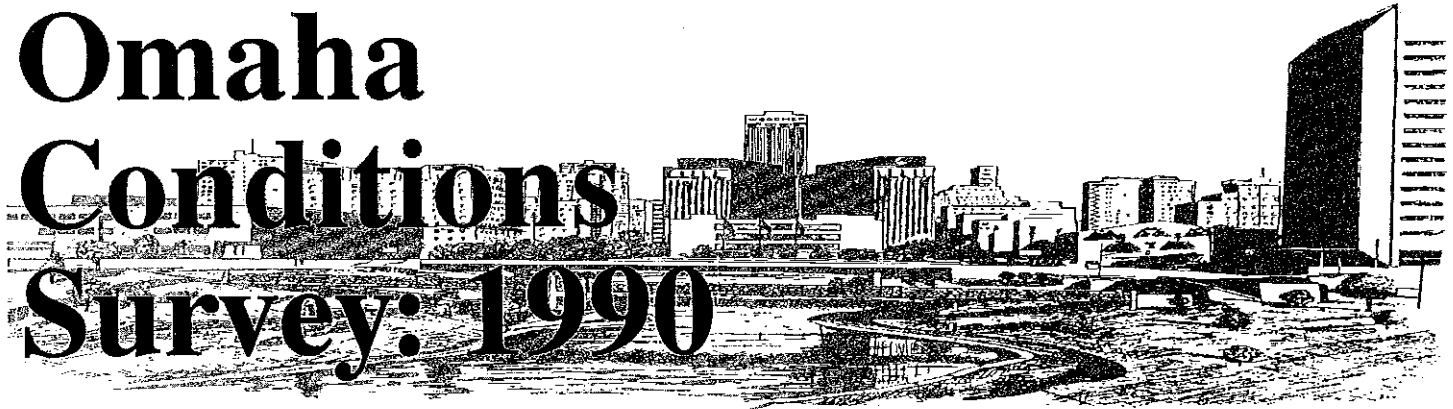
Pallavi Chavda, Senior Research Assoc.
Raymond A. Clark, Senior Community Service
Associate
Jerome Deichert, Senior Research Associate
David Fifer, Research Associate
Patricia Funk, Consultant
Melanie Hayes, Staff Secretary
Tim K. Himberger, Information Specialist
Betty Mayhew, Office Manager
John Navis, Sr. Community Service Assoc.
Alice Schumaker, Research Associate

Gregory Fant, Graduate Assistant
Kelly Green, Student Intern
Lynne L. Manganaro, Graduate Assistant
Kelly R. Moore, Graduate Intern
Kirk Slaughter, Graduate Assistant



Center for Public Affairs Research
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Peter Kiewit Conference Center
1313 Farnam-on-the-Mall
Omaha, Nebraska 68182

Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990



Survey Methodology

Sampling Procedure

The 1990 Omaha Conditions Survey was generated by interviewing adults from two different random samples of households: 779 from the Nebraska portion of the Omaha Metropolitan Statistical Area (Douglas, Sarpy and Washington counties), and 200 minority households in seven census tracts in North Omaha. The number and geographic location of respondents are shown on Maps 1 and 2 (see page

2). This profile describes the methodology of the two surveys and is designed to be used in conjunction with individual topical reports (see back page for a list of Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 reports).

Metropolitan Sample

The first step in constructing the three-county, or "metropolitan," sample was to establish a list of working telephone prefixes and working 1000 series within Douglas, Sarpy and

Washington counties. To compile this list, the Center for Public Affairs Research purchased a set of randomly selected telephone numbers from Donnelley Marketing Information Services (DMIS), located in Stamford, Connecticut.

DMIS provides services to assist companies with their marketing needs and compiles telephone lists drawn from over 4,700 telephone directories nationally. In addition, DMIS compiles auto lists from state Motor Vehicle Registration departments. These two files are combined to yield a master tape for a telephone prefix area. From the Omaha master tape, DMIS developed a list of 5,557 randomly selected telephone numbers for use by the Center for Public Affairs Research.

Using this list of randomly selected telephone numbers, the Center for Public Affairs Research dropped the last digit of each listing and substituted a random number (ranging from 0 to 9) to ensure that households with unlisted numbers had an opportunity to be surveyed. This produced a final list of 5,557 numbers which were used for the survey.

North Omaha Sample

The North Omaha survey interviewed 200 adults from minority households in seven census tracts in North Omaha (Tracts 7-12 and

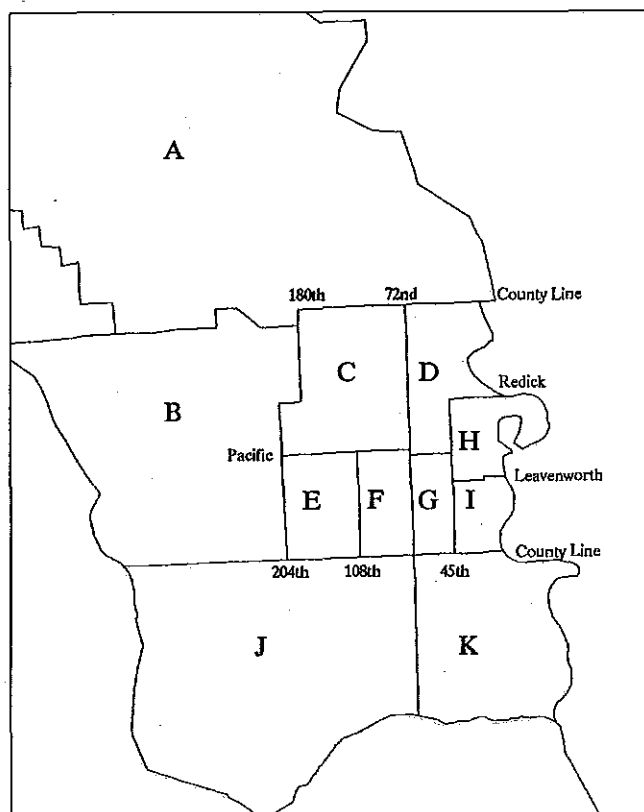
About the Omaha Conditions Survey

The Omaha Conditions Survey is part of an initiative at the Center for Public Affairs Research to monitor and improve the processes operating in Nebraska's urban areas by collecting quality information and making it accessible to those who need it. It is one component of the Nebraska Urban Conditions Research Program, which focuses on planning for the future in four key areas: economic and social conditions; minority conditions; social service delivery systems; and small town conditions.

Through the Omaha Conditions survey, the Center for Public Affairs Research will annually gather data from a random sample of 800 persons in Douglas, Sarpy and Washington counties in Nebraska. In addition, a smaller sample of 200 individuals living in sub-areas of Omaha will be interviewed each year.

Each year's survey will focus on the public's perception of the quality of life in the Omaha area; satisfaction with community services, programs and facilities; and demographic features. In addition to these items, each annual survey will focus on a special topic such as employment and labor force experiences, health care, crime, or environmental concerns.

See the back cover for information on reports covering special topics from the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990.



Map 1 - Geographic Distribution of the Metropolitan Sample

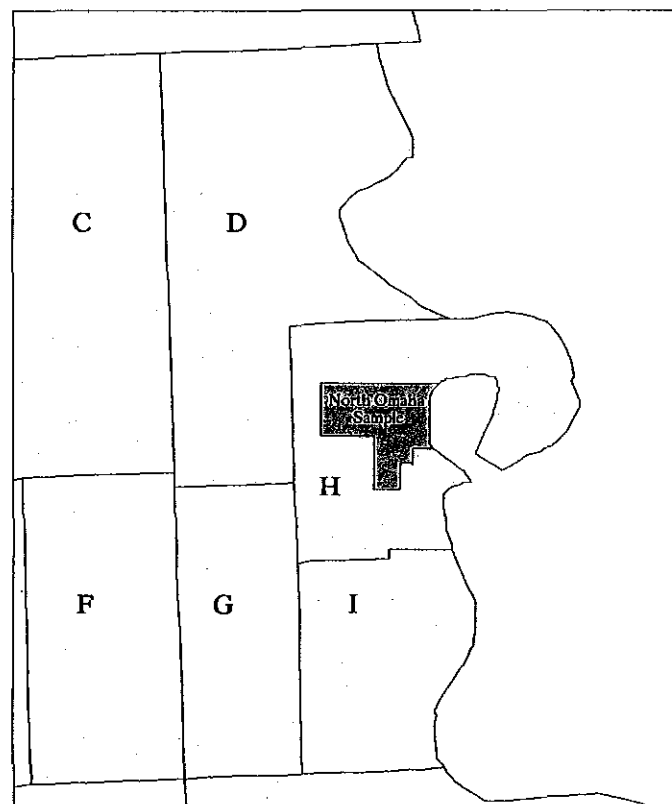
Area	Number of Respondents	Zip Code
A	27	68002, 68008, 68023, 68029, 68034, 68068
B	28	68007, 68022, 68064, 68069, 68116, 68118, 68130, 68135
C	90	68122, 68134, 68142, 68164
D	85	68104, 68112, 68152
E	92	68010, 68137, 68144, 68154
F	79	68114, 68124, 68127
G	68	68106, 68117, 68132
H	74	68102, 68110, 68111, 68131
I	72	68105, 68107, 68108
J	52	68028, 68046, 68059, 68128, 68136, 68138
K	112	68005, 68113, 68123, 68133, 68147, 68157

Map 1 shows the geographic distribution of the 779 metropolitan sample respondents. The three-county region was divided into eleven areas, using zip code boundaries. Map 1 also lists the zip codes comprising each area. Even though there are respondents for each area, some of the component zip codes may not have had a respondent. Furthermore, some Omaha Conditions Survey products will provide data for these eleven areas, while others will combine these areas into larger regions.

The number of respondents in each area reflects the population of the area. For example, fewer respondents come from the less densely populated areas of Washington County, western Douglas County, and western Sarpy County.

Map 2 is an enlarged section of eastern Douglas County and shows the relative location of the seven census tracts from which the North Omaha sample was drawn. The darker green portion of Area H represents the location of the North Omaha sample.

Map 2 - Location of the Seven Census Tracts Defining the North Omaha Sample



59.02). Each tract had a minority population of at least 85 percent in 1980. Current estimates place the minority population for the seven census tracts at about 92 percent.

A different sampling approach was used for the North Omaha survey. Because telephone prefixes often are allocated across fairly large geographic areas, it is difficult to target a relatively small geographic area. To develop the North Omaha list, a random sample of telephone numbers located in the area of interest was drawn from the US West street-address directory. However, rather than dropping the last digit as was done for the Metropolitan sample, the actual numbers were used for the North Omaha interviews.

While this approach resulted in the exclusion of households with unlisted phone numbers, it ensured that only those households within the target area would be called, thereby reducing the amount of time spent asking screening questions.

Error and Confidence Levels

The degree of precision afforded by survey data depends upon the size of the random sample, with larger samples yielding greater precision. This general rule assumes that there have been only trivial biases in the design, administration and compilation of the survey.

Two questions must be answered before one can decide how much credence to give to survey data. First, How much error accompanies a given estimate developed from the sample respondents? More simply put, How likely are the data to lead us astray? Second, How confident can we be that the error in the sample results is not greater than the amount specified?

Using accepted statistical techniques, we found that the metropolitan sample can be expected to have a maximum error of ± 3.5 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. The North Omaha sample has a maximum error level of ± 7.0 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.

Respondent Interviews

Interviews for the metropolitan sample were conducted by professional interviewers from Midwest Survey, Inc., during the January 11-29, 1990, period. Interview protocol required the interviewers to select the person 18 years or older who would have the next birthday in the household. Interviewers were instructed to call back if the eligible respondent was not available. Respondents were promised anonymity. In addition, concerned respondents were given the main telephone number of the Center for Public Affairs Research.

The North Omaha interviews were conducted by the same staff from Midwest Survey, Inc., during the January 30-February 5, 1990, period. The same interview protocol and survey instrument were used. The one exception was that households were screened to determine minority status. Only minority adults were interviewed for the North Omaha sample.

Respondent Characteristics

Telephone surveys can violate the basic assumption of randomness—that all individuals in the target group have an equal chance of being selected—in several ways. Among the most important are: nonresponse, exclusion of households with no telephones or with unlisted numbers, and overrepresentation of households with multiple telephone numbers.

Households Without Telephones or With Unlisted Numbers

The exclusion of households without telephones, or because they have unlisted numbers, can result in the underrepresentation of certain groups, particularly minority, low income, low education, young, and more mobile households within the area.

No Telephone. Because the Omaha Conditions Survey relied on telephone interviewing, households without telephones were excluded from participation. The possible bias resulting from this error could be handled by the assignment of weights to respondents with characteristics similar to those in households without telephones, but no current, reliable data exist for this task.

While it would thus be difficult to accurately correct for the exclusion of households without telephones, the error is probably quite small in the Omaha area. In 1980, for example, over 97 percent of all households in the three-county survey area had telephones. Among black households in the Omaha metropolitan area, telephone coverage was just over 95 percent.

Unlisted Phone Numbers. Interviewers were able to reach households in the metropolitan sample with unlisted numbers. As was indicated earlier, this was done by dropping the last digit of the telephone numbers provided by DMIS and substituting a random digit. The result was that 20.9 percent of the 779 metropolitan sample interviews were with adults who reported that their households had unlisted telephone numbers.

As was described earlier, the North Omaha sample required using actual telephone numbers to ensure that respondents were living in the target area and to most effectively use interviewing time. The result is that households with unlisted phone numbers were excluded from participation in the North Omaha survey.

While no data are available on the characteristics of target households with unlisted telephone numbers, we found no statistically significant differences in perceptions and attitudes between metropolitan sample respondents who reported they had listed telephone numbers and those who had unlisted numbers. Although this is an indirect comparison, there is no reason to expect different results for North Omaha.

Households With Multiple Telephone Numbers

Households with more than one telephone number have a higher probability of selection for the sample than households with only one number. To address this source of error, each respondent was asked whether there was more than one telephone number assigned to their household and, if so, how many phone numbers. Summary data indicate that 8.3 percent of the 779 metropolitan sample respondents and 12.1 percent of the 200 respondents in the North Omaha sample had multiple telephone numbers.

To assess whether weighting was required, respondents having one telephone number in the household were compared with those having multiple numbers. Comparisons included demographic characteristics such as age, race, gender, education, income, and length of residence in the Omaha area, as well as the opinion and attitude data collected through the interview. To determine whether differences in opinions and attitudes across demographic characteristics were statistically significant, the Chi Square test¹ was used. For both of the samples, the results of the Chi Square tests indicated no statistically significant differences, thus weighting was not required.

Nonresponse Bias

Survey nonresponse is the failure to obtain measurements on sampled units. Nonresponse weakens the usefulness of a survey to the extent that the nonrespondents are different from the respondents on survey measures. This type of survey error is probably the most difficult to work with because data on nonrespondent characteristics are typically unavailable (unless a special follow-up evaluation survey is conducted).

Absent information on the characteristics of both survey respondents and nonrespondents, at least two types of information must be developed to assess the extent to which nonresponse bias might be a problem. First, respondent charac-

teristics should be compared to those of the adult or household population for the same geographic area. Second, statistical tests should be examined for major respondent subgroups.

Respondent Characteristics:
Metropolitan Sample. Table 1 provides age, race, income and gender information for the metropolitan sample and for all adult residents/households in the Nebraska portion of the metropolitan area for 1989.²

Looking first at age (see section A, table 1), it is clear that the Omaha

Conditions Survey is low on the proportion of 18-24 year olds and somewhat high on the proportion of 25-34 year olds. For the other three age groups, survey respondents are very close to the adult population age profile.

Comparisons for race are presented in section B of table 1. Overall, minority groups constitute 9.5 percent of the total population of the three-county area; the percentage of minorities among Omaha Conditions Survey metropolitan sample respondents is 9.3 percent.

Income information is provided in section C. As was the case with age,

Table 1 - Comparison of Metropolitan Sample with All Adults/Households

	Percentage of Metropolitan Sample	Percentage of Metropolitan Area
A. Age:		
18-24	9.3	15.8
25-34	28.7	22.7
35-49	28.5	28.9
50-64	16.7	18.1
65 +	16.8	14.5
Total	100.0	100.0
B. Race:		
White	90.7	90.5
Black	7.2	7.4
Asian	0.7	0.7
American Indian	0.6	0.7
Hispanic	0.8	0.7
Total	100.0	100.0
C. Income:		
\$0-9,999	8.2	13.6
\$10,000-14,999	11.4	8.6
\$15,000-24,999	21.1	18.7
\$25,000-34,999	19.5	18.8
\$35,000-49,999	24.6	20.9
\$50,000 +	15.2	19.5
Total	100.0	100.0
D. Gender:		
Male	46.1	47.2
Female	53.9	52.8
Total	100.0	100.0

Sources: 1990 Omaha Conditions Survey: Metropolitan Sample; and CACI, Demographic and Income Forecast Report for Omaha MSA, 1990.

there are several differences between the metropolitan sample respondents and the three-county metropolitan population. One difference occurs at the lower end of the income continuum. Households reporting under \$10,000 a year in income comprise 8.2 percent of the sample, but 13.6 percent of the households in the three-county area. A similar difference exists at the upper end of the income continuum, where households earning more than \$50,000 a year in income constitute 15.2 percent of the sample and 19.5 percent of the metropolitan area.

The final comparison provided in table 1 is for gender (see section D). As can be seen, the proportion of the survey respondents who are female is just slightly higher than is the case for the adult population.

Respondent Characteristics: North Omaha Sample. Table 2 provides demographic information for both survey respondents and the adult/household population of the seven census tracts in the North Omaha survey area.³ Section A contains information on the ages of the respondents and the adult population. As can be seen, survey respondents' ages closely mirror those of the adult population of the area.

Income profiles are presented in section B of table 2. For the North Omaha sample, the proportion of respondents in the lowest income category (under \$10,000) is smaller than is the case for all households in the study area. On the other hand, households reporting from \$10,000 to \$14,999 are more heavily represented

in the sample than in the population of the seven census tracts.

Information on the gender of survey respondents and all adults in the North Omaha survey area is presented in section C. As can be seen, the gender proportions of survey respondents closely match those of the area.

Statistical Tests. Overall, the demographic characteristics of respondents in both of the samples appear to be representative of the relevant adult population comparison groups. As was mentioned, however, there are differences in several age and income groups when the metropolitan sample is compared to the three-county adult population. Likewise, there are differences in several income categories between North Omaha respondents and all adults and households in that area.

To determine whether these differences should be addressed through weighting techniques (a way of statistically increasing or decreasing the number of respondents with a given characteristic or set of characteristics), tests for significant differences in the responses of major respondent subgroups were conducted using the Chi Square statistic. Examination of the test results indicated no statistically significant differences.

Endnotes

1. The Chi Square test is a very general test that can be used to evaluate whether frequencies that have been obtained through an empirical process such as a survey differ significantly from those that would be expected for the general population.
2. The metropolitan information draws upon estimates for 1989. For source, see table 1.
3. Data for all adults/households in the North Omaha census tracts are drawn from estimates for 1989. For source, see table 2.

Table 2 - Comparison of North Omaha Sample with All North Omaha Adults/Households

	Percentage of North Omaha Sample	Percentage of North Omaha Area
A. Age:		
18-24	18.6	17.8
25-34	17.1	21.5
35-39	22.6	21.5
50-64	20.6	18.2
65 +	21.1	21.0
Total	100.0	100.0
B. Income:		
\$0-9,999	30.9	40.2
\$10,000-14,999	22.6	14.3
\$15,000-24,999	18.5	21.1
\$25,000-34,999	15.5	11.7
\$35,000-49,999	7.7	8.5
\$50,000 +	4.8	4.2
Total	100.0	100.0
C. Gender:		
Male	40.5	42.8
Female	59.5	57.2
Total	100.0	100.0

Sources: 1990 Omaha Conditions Survey: North Omaha Sample; and CACI, Demographic and Income Forecast Report for Census Tracts 7-12 and 59.02, 1990.

Published by the Center for Public Affairs Research (formerly Center for Applied Urban Research) and mailed free upon request. Copyright 1990 © Center for Public Affairs Research. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (photocopying, electronic, mechanical, recording, or other) without the prior written permission of the copyright holder.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA,
Delbert D. Weber, Chancellor

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE,
David W. Hinton, Dean

CENTER FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS RESEARCH,
Russell L. Smith, Director
Robert F. Blair, Research Associate
Joyce Carson, Word Processing Specialist
Raymond A. Clark, Senior Community Service Associate
Jerome Deichert, Senior Research Associate
David Fifer, Research Associate
Patricia Funk, Consultant
Melanie Hayes, Staff Secretary
Tim K. Himberger, Information Specialist
Chris E. Marshall, Senior Research Associate
Betty Mayhew, Office Manager
Margaret McDonald Rasmussen, Editor
Alice Schumaker, Research Associate
Joseph Baldassano, Graduate Assistant
Gregory Pant, Graduate Intern
Kelly Green, Student Intern
Kathryn Hegarty, Student Intern
Marie-Claude Lozier, Graduate Assistant



The University of Nebraska at Omaha is an Equal
Opportunity/Affirmative Action Educational Institution

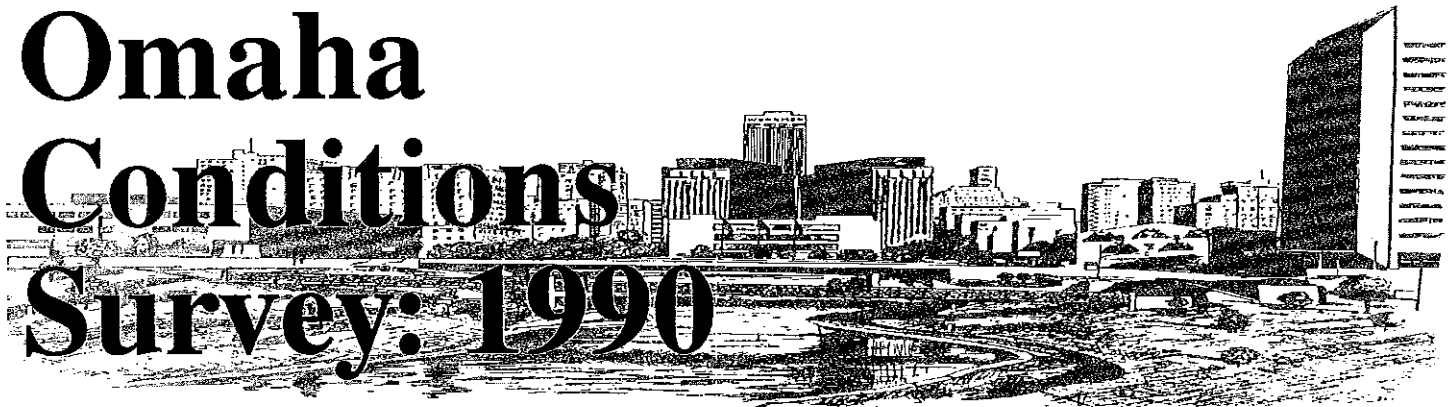
Interested in Receiving Additional Reports from the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990?

Write or call the Center for Public Affairs Research, Peter Kiewit Conference Center, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182; (402) 595-2311 for one or more of the following reports:

- Property Crime Victimization and Fear of Crime
- Opinions About Current Issues
- Omaha Area Residents Rate the Quality of Life
- Characteristics and Experiences of the Omaha Area Labor Force
- Citizen Evaluation of Services, Facilities and Programs

Center for Public Affairs Research
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Peter Kiewit Conference Center
Omaha, Nebraska 68182

Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990



Opinions About Current Issues

by

Russell L. Smith, Director, Center for Public Affairs Research

The Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 asked Omaha residents their opinions about several issues currently facing the Omaha metropolitan area. The issues examined were: support for economic development in

North Omaha; whether a new convention center should be built, and if so, where it should be located; economic development priorities; and opinions about property taxes and tax relief.

Several questions focused on state-level decisions, including support for a proposed state constitutional change to permit use of local tax dollars to directly support economic development; perceptions of property tax levels; and preferred sources of new state-level revenue if such revenue would reduce property taxes by increasing state aid to local governmental units.

In addition to summarizing opinions about these issues, this report highlights differences in issue support across population subgroups in the Greater Omaha Area. Maps are used to illustrate how opinions vary across geographic subareas. Detailed information on the methodology used in conducting the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 is presented in the report, "Survey Methodology" (see the list of reports on page 6).

Support for Economic Development in North Omaha

The first question asked of Douglas County residents focused on support for city government and private efforts to promote economic development in North Omaha. The

Key Findings

- Almost 9 of 10 (89.6 percent) respondents indicated support for city government and private efforts to promote economic development in North Omaha.
- A slight majority (58.0 percent) of Douglas County residents favor building a new convention center.
- Convention center support is lower among residents east of 72nd Street, among those with lower levels of education, and among women.
- The largest proportion of respondents favor a site on or near the present site of the city auditorium (32.6 percent); 24.7 percent favor a site in the Riverfront redevelopment area; 21.9 percent favor a mid-county site.
- Fewer than one-half of those responding (47.4 percent) would support a constitutional amendment allowing local government use of local tax dollars for economic development.
- Respondents equally favor three strategies for using tax dollars to expand local government economic development efforts: attracting business from outside the area; assisting existing business; and improving public services.
- Just over two-thirds (67.5 percent) of Omaha area respondents say that property taxes are too high.
- Increasing the state sales tax is preferred by 39.1 percent of respondents as a source of new state revenue to reduce local property taxes.

full question and the number and percentage responding are presented in table 1. As can be seen, just over one-half (51.0 percent) of those responding said they strongly agreed that city government and private leaders should work toward better employment and economic development opportunities in North Omaha. An additional 38.6 percent indicated they agreed. Taken together, these two categories contain 89.6 percent of the responses.

Table 1 - Responses to the following question:

There has been a good deal of discussion in Omaha over the years about economic development in the area known as North Omaha. Do you agree that it is important for city government and private leaders to work to ensure better employment and economic development opportunities in North Omaha?

	Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Do you:		
Strongly agree	296	51.0
Agree	224	38.6
Disagree	28	4.8
Strongly disagree	14	2.4
Don't know	18	3.1
Total	580	100.0*

*Percentage of responses rounded to nearest tenth.

An examination of differences in support indicated no statistically significant differences across age, race, education, home ownership, income, employment, or gender categories. In addition, support for North Omaha economic development did not differ with respondents' attitudes toward property tax levels or outlook about the Omaha area's future.

Support for a New Convention Center

Residents of Douglas County were also asked whether a new convention center should be built in Omaha. As

Table 2 - Responses to the following question:

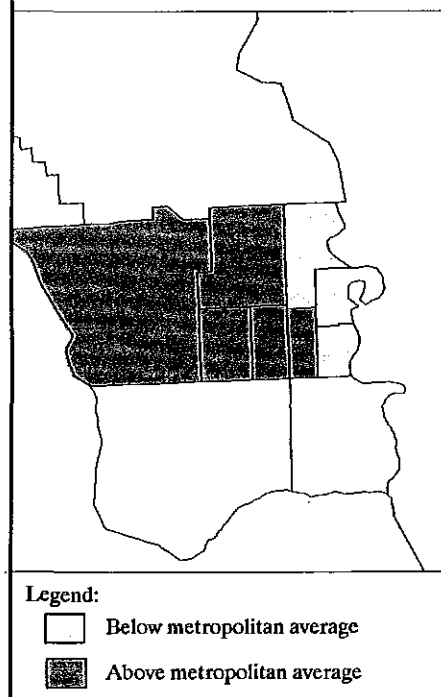
A City of Omaha task force recently recommended that a new convention center be built in Omaha. Should there be a new convention center?

	Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Yes	335	58.0
No	183	31.7
Don't know	60	10.4
Total	578	100.0

table 2 indicates, 58 percent responded "yes," just under one-third (31.7 percent) said "no," and about 1 in 10 said they didn't know or were not sure.

Map 1 portrays variations of support in each of the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 geographic areas (the reference map on page 5 shows the relationship of the areas to major street and county boundaries).

Map 1 - Percentage of Douglas County Respondents Supporting a New Convention Center by Area



Among the eight areas in Douglas County, the three areas east of 72nd Street exhibit the lowest levels of support for building a new convention center. In two of the areas—D and I—fewer than one-half of the respondents support building a new center.

Few demographic factors distinguish support for or opposition to this issue. However, respondents with lower levels of education were less likely to respond "yes" (46.6 percent), while those with college or advanced degrees were more supportive (65.0 percent responded "yes"). In addition, men are more likely to support building a new convention center than are women. No other statistically significant differences were found.

Convention Center Location

Respondents were also asked what site they would prefer for a new convention center, should one be built (see table 3). Among the four location alternatives, the largest propor-

Table 3 - Responses to the following question:

If a new convention center were to be built, where do you feel such a center should be located?

	Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Downtown on or near land currently occupied by the city auditorium	188	32.6
As a part of the Riverfront Redevelopment Area	142	24.7
In the mid-Douglas County area such as at Ak-Sar-Ben	126	21.9
Someplace else	67	11.6
Don't know	53	9.2
Total	576	100.0

tion of respondents (32.6 percent) favored a site on or near the present land containing the city auditorium. The other two specific site choices — the Riverfront redevelopment and Ak-Sar-Ben areas — received virtually the same proportion of support.

Those favoring either the Riverfront or auditorium area (combined to form a downtown/central business district site category), compose 57.3 percent of respondents, compared with 21.9 percent favoring a mid-county site.

Local Tax Dollars and Economic Development

Currently, the Nebraska constitution does not permit local governments to use local tax dollars to directly support economic development. The only exception is for marketing the community or area. During the past two years local government organizations such as the League of Nebraska Municipalities have supported state legislation to put before the state's voters a constitutional change legalizing direct local government support of economic development. To gauge public opinion about this issue, respondents from all three of the metropolitan counties (Douglas, Sarpy and Washington counties) included in the Omaha Conditions

Survey: 1990 were asked whether they would support such a constitutional change.

Table 4 shows that fewer than one-half (47.4 percent) of those responding said they would support such a constitutional change. Thirty-nine percent said "no," and 13.6 percent said they didn't know or were not sure. Among the population subgroups examined, the only statistically significant difference found was for age. Respondents aged 18 to 34 are much more likely to support a constitutional change, while those over age 50 are more likely to say "no."

Economic Development Funding Priorities

The Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 also asked respondents from the three metropolitan counties to indicate which of four economic development activities they would most favor if city or county governments were permitted to use local tax dollars to support economic development.

Respondents ranked the four choices from 1 (highest priority) to 4 (lowest priority). The results are presented in table 5. Three of the activities are almost equally preferred by those responding in the metropolitan area: attracting new business and industry from outside Omaha, assisting existing Omaha area business/industry in expanding or staying in business, and improving public services and facilities to make the area a better place to do business.

Table 5 - Responses to the following question:

If your city or county government were permitted to use local tax dollars to support economic development, which of the following activities would you most favor investing funds in?

	"Top Priority" Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Attracting new business/industry from outside Omaha	214	28.6
Assisting existing Omaha area business/industry in expanding or staying in business	203	27.1
Developing new business and entrepreneurs	73	9.7
Improving public services and facilities to make the area a better place to do business	209	27.9
Don't know	50	6.7
Total	749	100.0

Developing new business and entrepreneurs was identified as the top priority by only 9.4 percent of those responding.

Table 4 - Responses to the following question:

Currently, city and county governments cannot use local tax dollars to directly support economic development, except in marketing the area. Would you support a change in the Nebraska Constitution to permit such an activity?

	Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Yes	359	47.4
No	295	39.0
Don't know	103	13.6
Total	757	100.0

Table 6 - Percentage of Respondents Preferring Four Economic Development Strategies by Area

Strategy	Area										
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Attracting business and industry	37.5	55.6	37.8	29.5	26.2	30.4	31.3	28.6	18.8	34.0	27.8
Assisting existing business	29.2	14.8	28.0	35.9	33.3	30.4	21.9	33.3	35.9	23.4	23.7
Developing new business and entrepreneurs	25.0	11.1	8.6	5.1	7.1	10.1	9.4	14.3	17.2	4.3	12.4
Improving public services	8.3	18.5	25.6	29.5	33.3	29.0	37.5	23.8	28.1	38.3	36.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

While no statistically significant differences in economic development preferences exist across population subgroups, an interesting geographic pattern is evidenced in table 6.

Respondents in Sarpy County (Areas J and K) favor improving public services to make the area a better place to do business. Respondents in areas D, H and I—all in Douglas County and east of 72nd Street—favor retention and expansion efforts focusing on existing businesses. The three northwest areas (A, B and C) support the attraction of business and industry from outside the Omaha area.

Opinions About Property Taxes and Tax Relief

The final set of issue questions covered respondents' perceptions of property taxes and preferred sources of new state revenue to enable increased aid to local governments. Table 7 contains information on the number and proportion of those saying property taxes were too high, about right or too low.

Just over two-thirds of the respondents (67.5 percent) said their property taxes were too high, considering the services provided. Fewer than one percent (0.8 percent) said their taxes were too low, and 25.6 percent indicated they felt their property taxes were about right. No statistical-

ly significant differences in opinions about property tax levels were found across population subgroups such as age, race, education, income, gender, or employment status. Variations in respondents' assessments of property tax levels are portrayed in map 2. Areas C, D, H and K fall below the metropolitan average for percentage saying property taxes are too high.

Map 2 - Percentage of Omaha Area Respondents Describing Property Tax Levels as "Too High" by Area

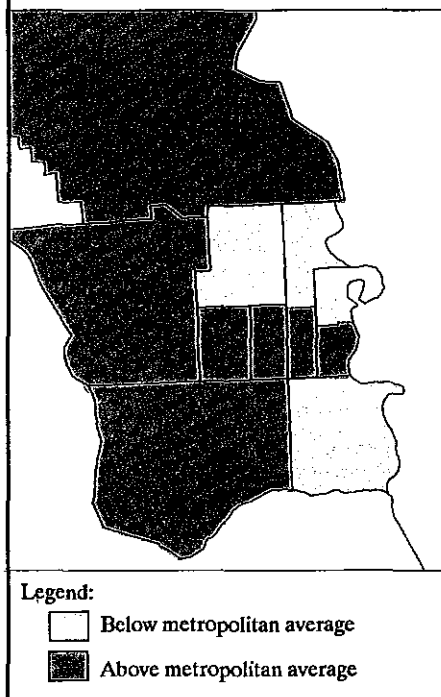


Table 8 - Responses to the following question:

One suggested approach to reducing property taxes, yet maintaining current services, has been to increase state aid to local governments by increasing the state sales tax, the state income tax, or both. Which would you most favor increasing so that state aid to local governments can be increased?

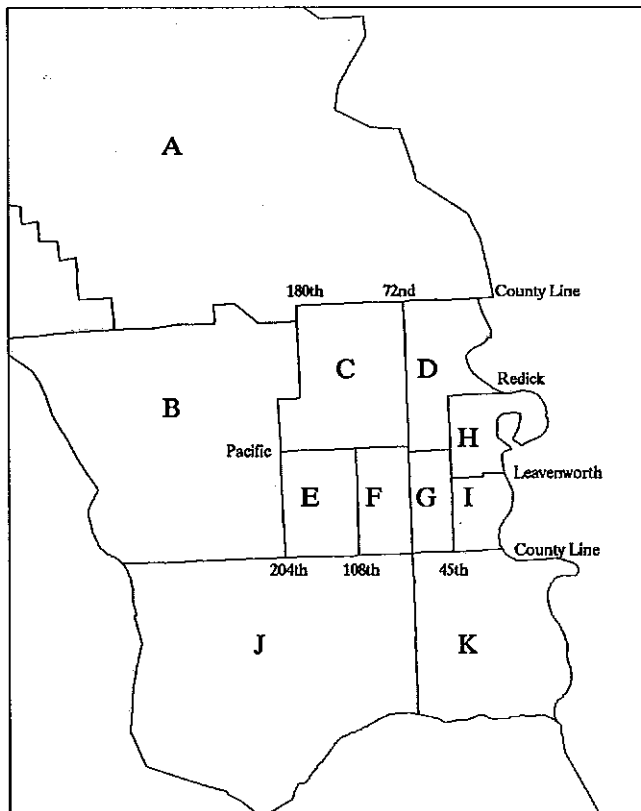
	Responses	
	Number	Percentage
State sales tax only	298	39.1
State income tax only	82	10.7
Increase both of these	67	8.8
Look to other state-level sources	154	20.2
Increase no state taxes and cut state-provided services	109	14.3
Don't know	53	6.9
Total	763	100.0

Table 7 - Responses to the following question:

The amount of property taxes that Nebraskans pay has received increasing attention over the past few years. Considering the services provided, do you think property taxes are...

	Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Too high	518	67.5
About right	196	25.6
Too low	6	0.8
Don't know	47	6.1
Total	767	100.0

When asked which of several revenue options they preferred as a way of reducing property taxes yet maintaining current services, the largest proportions of Omaha area residents preferred increasing the sales tax only (39.1 percent), or looking to other state-level sources (20.2 percent). The third largest proportion—14.3 percent—indicated they would favor not increasing state taxes, but cutting state-provided services instead (see table 8).



Reference Map Showing Geographic Distribution of the Metropolitan Sample

Area	Number of Respondents	Zip Code
A	27	68002, 68008, 68023, 68029, 68034, 68068
B	28	68007, 68022, 68064, 68069, 68116, 68118, 68130, 68135
C	90	68122, 68134, 68142, 68164
D	85	68104, 68112, 68152
E	92	68010, 68137, 68144, 68154
F	79	68114, 68124, 68127
G	68	68106, 68117, 68132
H	74	68102, 68110, 68111, 68131
I	72	68105, 68107, 68108
J	52	68028, 68046, 68059, 68128, 68136, 68138
K	112	68005, 68113, 68123, 68133, 68147, 68157

About the Omaha Conditions Survey

The Omaha Conditions Survey is part of an initiative at the Center for Public Affairs Research to monitor and improve the processes operating in Nebraska's urban areas by collecting quality information and making it accessible to those who need it. It is one component of the Nebraska Urban Conditions Research Program, which focuses on planning for the future in four key areas: economic and social conditions; minority conditions; social service delivery systems; and small town conditions.

Through the Omaha Conditions survey, the Center for Public Affairs Research will annually gather data from a random sample of 800 persons in Douglas, Sarpy and Washington counties in Nebraska. In addition, a smaller sample of 200 individuals living in sub-areas of Omaha will be interviewed each year.

Each year's survey will focus on the public's perception of the quality of life in the Omaha area; satisfaction with community services, programs and facilities; and demographic features. In addition to these items, each annual survey will focus on a special topic such as employment and labor force experiences, health care, crime, or environmental concerns.

See the back cover for information on reports covering special topics from the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990.

Published by the Center for Public Affairs Research (formerly Center for Applied Urban Research) and mailed free upon request. Copyright 1990 © Center for Public Affairs Research. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (photocopying, electronic, mechanical, recording, or other) without the prior written permission of the copyright holder.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA,
Delbert D. Weber, Chancellor

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE,
David W. Hinton, Dean

CENTER FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS RESEARCH,
Russell L. Smith, Director
Robert F. Blair, Research Associate
Joyce Carson, Word Processing Specialist
Raymond A. Clark, Senior Community Service Associate
Jerome Deichert, Senior Research Associate
David Fifer, Research Associate
Patricia Funk, Consultant
Melanie Hayes, Staff Secretary
Tim K. Himberger, Information Specialist
Chris E. Marshall, Senior Research Associate
Betty Mayhew, Office Manager
Margaret McDonald Rasmussen, Editor
Alice Schumaker, Research Associate
Joseph Baldassano, Graduate Assistant
Gregory Pant, Graduate Intern
Kelly Green, Student Intern
Kathryn Hegarty, Student Intern
Marie-Claude Lozier, Graduate Assistant



The University of Nebraska at Omaha is an Equal
Opportunity/Affirmative Action Educational Institution

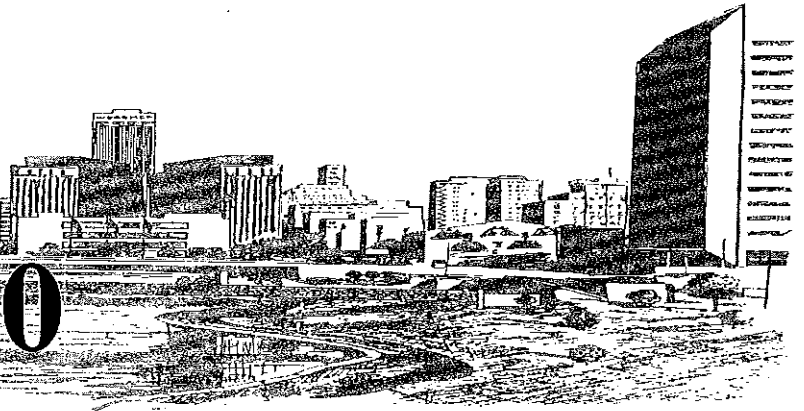
Interested in Receiving Additional Reports from the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990?

Write or call the Center for Public Affairs Research, Peter Kiewit Conference Center, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182; (402) 595-2311 for one or more of the following reports:

- Survey Methodology
- Property Crime Victimization and Fear of Crime
- Omaha Area Residents Rate the Quality of Life
- Characteristics and Experiences of the Omaha Area Labor Force
- Citizen Evaluation of Services, Facilities and Programs

Center for Public Affairs Research
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Peter Kiewit Conference Center
Omaha, Nebraska 68182

Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990



Citizens Look at the Best and Worst of the Omaha Area

by
Jerome Deichert, Senior Research Associate
and Joseph Baldassano, Graduate Assistant

One of the primary purposes of the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 was to collect information on how residents view the Omaha area—what the best and worst attributes of the area are, and what problems leaders should be addressing.

Two open-ended questions on the survey asked respondents their opinions on the three best and the three worst things about the Omaha area. Another open-ended question asked respondents to indicate what they felt were the three most important problems that the Omaha area should be trying to address. The open-

ended question format was used because it allows respondents to characterize issues in their own words. In addition, open-ended questions make it possible to identify issues and priorities that researchers developing a social survey can't anticipate.

The Best of the Omaha Area

Table 1 presents summary information on the items mentioned by respondents as the best things about Omaha. The summary information was

developed by counting the total number of times an item was mentioned as one of the three best attributes of the Omaha area. These sums, then, were divided by the total number of persons who answered the question and were expressed as percentages. (The percentages do not add to 100 percent because each respondent could give up to three answers.) All tables in this report are constructed in a similar manner.

Schools and the quality of life were mentioned most frequently (30.4 and 30.3 percent respectively) as being among the best things about Omaha. The schools category encompasses comments on the quality of schools, the depth of programs, caring teachers, and other comments about schools. Quality of life includes comments about the size of the area's population, great place to live and raise a family, good family activities, and room for future growth. It should be noted that, while schools and quality of life nearly tied as the most often mentioned responses to this question, quality of life was more frequently the first-mentioned response. Quality of life was the first-mentioned item for 18.3 percent of those responding, while schools were

Key Findings

- The five most often mentioned best things about the Omaha area are: schools (30.4 percent), quality of life (30.3 percent), friendly people (28.1 percent), jobs and business opportunities (26.4 percent), and entertainment and cultural activities (20.6 percent).
- The five most often mentioned worst things about the Omaha area are: drugs (29.1 percent), gangs (28.1 percent), high taxes (20.4 percent), crime (18.8 percent), and street conditions (18.0 percent).
- The five most important problems the Omaha area should be trying to address are: drugs (51.0 percent), gangs (38.9 percent), crime (19.6 percent), high taxes (18.7 percent), and homelessness (16.6 percent).

Table 1 - Respondents' Views of the Best Things About the Omaha Area

Rank	Category	Percent Responding
1	Schools	30.4
2	Quality of life	30.3
3	Friendly people	28.1
4	Jobs and business opportunities	26.4
5	Entertainment and cultural activities	20.6
6	Shopping	14.1
7	Convenient location	10.5
7	Low cost of living	10.5
9	Quality of the environment	10.2
10	Low traffic volume	9.3
11	Climate	7.9
12	Housing	7.7
13	Low crime rate	6.6
14	Parks and recreation facilities	6.2
15	Community organizations and churches	5.2
16	Restaurants	4.7
17	Medical facilities	4.6
18	Quality leaders	4.2
19	Redevelopment efforts	3.5
20	Slow-paced lifestyle	3.2
21	Law enforcement	3.0
22	People address problems	2.4
23	Sports	1.9

the first-mentioned items for 11.2 percent of the respondents. Ranking second behind quality of life as a first-mentioned response was friendly people (12.1 percent).

Three additional aspects were mentioned by 20 percent or more of those responding: friendly people (28.1 percent), jobs and business opportunities (26.4 percent), and entertainment and cultural activities (20.6 percent).

Filling out the top-10 ranks (by proportion of respondents mentioning the item) are four items that were men-

tioned by 10 percent or more of Omaha area residents: shopping, convenient location in the middle of the United States, low cost of living, and quality of the environment. Included in this latter category are facets such as the cleanliness of the community and limited pollution (air pollution and other types).

Variations in Perceptions of the Best Attributes of the Omaha Area

To better understand respondents' views, the researchers examined the five most frequently mentioned items across population sub-groups. Several interesting patterns were identified and are summarized in the following sections. Table 2 presents the proportions of various population subgroups mentioning each of the top five best attributes of the Omaha area.

Schools. Mentioning schools most frequently as one of the best attributes of Omaha were respondents between the ages of 35 and 64, those with educations beyond high school, and those with total household incomes of more than \$20,000 a year. Particularly pronounced is the difference between respondents with household incomes of \$20,000-\$39,999 and \$40,000 and over per year, and those with incomes less than \$20,000 — a two-to-one ratio for each comparison.

Quality of Life. Respondents aged 65 and over were much less likely to mention quality of life as one of the best attributes of the Omaha area: 21.7 percent of those aged 65 and over men-

tioned quality of life, while 33.3 of respondents aged 18-34 and 31.2 percent of those 35-64 mentioned this attribute. Respondents with less than a high school education were also less likely to mention quality of life (15.1 percent), as were those with incomes below \$20,000 a year.

Friendly People. Respondents with high school degrees only or with post-high school educations were twice as likely to mention friendly people as those without high school degrees. Mention of this item did not vary appreciably across gender, race, age or income groups.

Jobs and Business Opportunities. As might be expected, jobs and business opportunities were much less likely to be mentioned among the best attributes of the Omaha area by those over age 65 (16.7 percent). No other major differences were found across population subgroups.

Entertainment and Cultural Activities. White, female, older, and better educated respondents were more likely to mention entertainment and cultural activities and opportunities as among the best attributes of the Omaha area.

Table 2 - Percentage of Respondents Mentioning Top Five Best Attributes of Omaha Area by Demographic Characteristics

	Age			Education			Income			Sex		Race	
	18-34	35-64	65 +	No High School Degree	High School Degree Only	At Least Some College	Under \$20,000	\$20,000-\$39,999	\$40,000 and Over	Male	Female	White	Non-white
Schools	27.7	35.3	23.3	24.7	28.2	32.3	17.9	34.8	36.6	25.1	35.1	30.3	31.3
Quality of life	33.3	31.2	21.7	15.1	28.6	33.4	25.9	31.9	34.0	32.6	28.3	30.0	34.4
Friendly people	27.0	29.4	26.7	15.1	28.6	30.0	26.4	25.3	31.4	30.3	26.3	28.3	25.0
Jobs and business opportunities	28.7	27.9	16.7	26.0	25.2	26.9	23.4	30.8	26.8	27.7	25.3	26.6	23.4
Entertainment and cultural activities	18.8	21.2	23.3	15.1	17.5	22.8	22.9	20.9	20.1	14.1	26.3	22.3	3.1

The Worst of the Omaha Area

Table 3 summarizes the items mentioned as the worst attributes of the Omaha area. The data were developed using the same procedure as for the best attributes of the Omaha area. Table 3 shows that drugs and gangs were thought to be the worst problems facing Omaha, with respective percentages of 29.1 and 28.1. The only other item mentioned by more than one-fifth of the respondents was high taxes (20.4 percent).

Crime was viewed as one of the worst things about Omaha by 18.8 percent of those responding.¹ Street conditions were mentioned by 18.0 percent of the respondents. This item includes smoothness of streets as well as traffic engineering. The five remaining top-10 worst items are a diverse group and include factors that were also mentioned as some of the best things about the Omaha area. Specifically, jobs and business opportunities, and entertainment and cultural activities are listed among both the top-10 best and the top-10 worst attributes of the area. Other top-10 factors included in the worst list are the weather, traffic congestion, and poor leadership.

Variations in Perceptions of the Worst Attributes of the Omaha Area

In the following sections and in table 4, the five worst-rated attributes of the Omaha area are compared across characteristics of the respon-

Table 3 - Respondents' Views of the Worst Things About the Omaha Area

Rank	Category	Percent
1	Drugs	29.1
2	Gangs	28.1
3	High taxes	20.4
4	Crime	18.8
5	Street conditions	18.0
6	Weather	14.5
7	Lack of jobs or business opportunities	10.4
8	Traffic congestion	9.2
9	Poor leaders	8.8
10	Lack of entertainment or cultural activities	6.0
11	Run-down neighborhoods	5.6
12	Overemphasis on development	5.1
12	Law enforcement	5.1
14	Poor schools	4.5
15	Low wages and incomes	4.1
16	Parks and recreational facilities	3.8
17	Homelessness	3.4
18	Housing costs	3.2
19	Race relations	2.9
20	Housing policies	2.5
21	People	1.6
21	Poor snow removal	1.6
23	No professional sports	0.5
24	Elderly needs	0.1

dents. Included in these characteristics are age, gender, race, education and income.

Drugs. While 29.1 percent of all respondents mentioned drugs as one of the worst things about the Omaha area (see table 3), 42.7 percent of those aged 65 and over and almost one-half (49.3 percent) of those with less than a high school education mentioned drugs. Women were also more likely to mention drugs. Across

income and racial groups, no major differences exist.

Gangs. Persons who mentioned gangs are more likely to be younger (aged 18-34), female, and have no college education. Income and race did not play significant roles in whether respondents mentioned gangs as one of the worst attributes of the Omaha area.

High Taxes. This issue was least likely to be mentioned by those with less education and by persons from households earning less than \$20,000 a year. The greatest difference, however, is between white and nonwhite respondents. Just under 22 percent of white respondents mentioned high taxes as a worst attribute of the Omaha area, while 8.8 percent of nonwhite respondents identified the same issue as such.

Crime. As table 4 shows, crime was more likely to be cited as one of the worst things about the area by older persons or persons with lower levels of education.

Street Conditions. Few major differences exist in the propensity of various population subgroups to mention street conditions as one of the worst attributes of the Omaha area. As table 4 shows, however, respondents with a high school education or more are a little more likely to identify this item. White respondents are also somewhat more likely to mention street conditions as one of the worst things about the area.

Table 4 - Percentage of Respondents Mentioning Five Worst Attributes of Omaha Area by Demographic Characteristics

	Age			Education			Income			Sex		Race	
	18-34	35-64	65+	No High School Degree	High School Degree Only	At Least Some College	Under \$20,000	\$20,000-\$39,999	\$40,000 and Over	Male	Female	White	Non-white
Drugs	23.8	28.9	42.7	49.3	32.2	24.4	29.4	29.0	28.0	23.7	33.6	29.2	29.4
Gangs	33.5	28.0	15.4	33.8	34.6	24.2	30.9	25.7	25.3	22.5	32.8	27.7	32.4
High taxes	17.8	24.3	16.2	8.5	20.7	22.2	14.7	23.4	23.6	22.6	19.4	21.7	8.8
Crime	14.9	19.8	24.8	36.6	18.8	16.0	22.1	17.1	19.2	17.1	20.2	19.1	14.7
Street conditions	16.0	20.4	16.2	12.7	20.7	17.6	16.2	19.0	19.2	18.0	17.9	18.4	11.8

Most Important Problems to Address

When asked what they felt were the most important problems that the Omaha area should be trying to address, over one-half of the respondents (51.0 percent) mentioned drugs (see table 5). Gangs were mentioned second most frequently, by 38.9 percent of the respondents, as one of the top three priority problem areas. After drugs and gangs, the proportion identifying each given issue as a priority problem dramatically falls off. In fact, no other problem or set of related problems comes close to the level of community consensus regarding drugs and gangs.

Four more issues—crime, high taxes, homelessness, and jobs and business opportunities—were mentioned by 16 percent or more of the respondents. Even though homelessness and jobs and business opportunities had the same percentage of responses, homelessness was more likely to be the first mentioned item.

Street conditions, youth needs (e.g., recreation programs, counseling) and schools (primarily quality) were mentioned by at least 10 percent of respondents. Ranking tenth on the list of priority community problems was housing, particularly the supply of affordable housing.

Variations in Perceptions of the Most Important Problems

The five top issues that respondents feel the Omaha area should be trying to address are compared across demographic characteristics of the

Table 5 - Respondents' Views of the Priority Problems to Address in the Omaha Area

Rank	Category	Percent
1	Drugs	51.0
2	Gangs	38.9
3	Crime	19.6
4	High taxes	18.7
5	Homelessness	16.6
5	Lack of jobs or business opportunities	16.6
7	Street conditions	14.1
8	Youth needs	11.3
9	Quality of schools	10.0
10	Supply and cost of housing	8.1
11	Attracting new business	7.1
12	Street congestion	5.5
13	Quality of the environment	5.0
14	Public housing	4.3
15	Urban redevelopment/rehabilitation	4.1
16	Discipline in schools	3.4
17	Race relations	3.0
17	Quality of government	3.0
19	Law enforcement	2.4
20	Elderly needs	2.2
21	Public transportation	2.1
22	More cultural activities	1.2
23	Sports and recreational programs	0.8
24	Parks and recreational facilities	0.7

respondents. Results of this comparison can be found in table 6.

Drugs. Regardless of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, close to one-half view drugs as an important problem. However, there are slight increases in the perception of drugs as a priority problem as age, education and income increase. Whites also are more likely to view drugs as an important problem than are nonwhites.

Gangs. The largest difference in responses concerning gangs as a priority problem can be explained by age, as the percentage of younger respondents is more than double the percentage of older respondents citing this issue (50.3 percent compared with 22.1 percent). Respondents with high school degrees only and those with incomes below \$20,000 also are more likely to view drugs as an important problem that needs to be addressed. Gender and race explain only minor differences.

Crime. The mention of crime as an important problem varies most by age, gender, and education. Persons 65 or older mentioned crime more often than did either of the two younger age groups, and women and persons without high school degrees were more likely to mention crime as a problem. No significant differences exist in responses by income or race.

High Taxes. The largest differences in the percentage of persons mentioning high taxes as a problem can be found in the income and race categories presented in table 6. Taxes were more likely to be mentioned as a problem as income increased, and Whites were more than twice as likely as nonwhites to mention high taxes as a problem. The perception of high taxes as a problem also increases with age and education. Gender appears to make little difference in the percentage of responses.

Homelessness. Table 6 shows that the selection of homelessness as an important issue that needs to be ad-

Table 6 - Percentage of Respondents Mentioning Top Five Priority Problems for the Omaha Area by Demographic Characteristics

	Age			Education			Income			Sex		Race	
	18-34	35-64	65+	No High School Degree	High School Degree Only	At Least Some College	Under \$20,000	\$20,000-\$39,999	\$40,000 and Over	Male	Female	White	Non white
Drugs	49.3	51.6	54.1	42.9	50.0	52.8	44.9	52.9	55.7	51.3	50.7	51.9	44.3
Gangs	50.3	35.0	22.1	36.4	44.5	36.7	44.9	36.7	37.0	35.2	42.0	38.4	44.3
Crime	17.3	19.0	27.0	26.0	19.7	18.5	22.9	17.3	17.2	17.6	26.3	20.1	14.3
High taxes	15.3	20.4	22.1	13.0	17.0	20.4	13.6	19.8	25.0	22.8	15.2	19.9	7.1
Homelessness	18.4	16.9	11.5	20.8	16.5	15.9	16.4	18.3	14.1	11.5	20.8	16.6	14.3

dressed in the Omaha area varied little by characteristics of the respondents, with the exception of gender (11.5 percent for men and 20.8 percent for women). Persons aged 18 to 64 viewed homelessness as more of a problem than did those 65 and older. There were no significant differences across education, income, or race categories.

Geographic Variations in Perceptions of What's Best, What's Worst, and the Most Important Problems

Tables 7, 8 and 9 review the top five items mentioned for the three questions and highlight the differences among regions within the Omaha area. Each table contains the top five responses for the total metropolitan area and for each subarea. (For a

description of these subareas see map 1 on page 7.)

The tables in this section were developed as were those in previous sections, and they can be read in two ways. Reading down a column allows one to see the percentages of responses for the top five items in an individual area. Reading across a row allows one to compare the response percentages of individual areas with each other as well as with the total metro area.

The Best Aspects by Area

Table 7 focuses on the best aspects of the Omaha area. Schools ranked as the top-mentioned aspect of the Omaha area in 5 of the 11 subareas. These areas covered all of Sarpy County and the western portion of Douglas County in addition to Area F, which contains Ralston, and Area D in northeastern Douglas County.

Respondents in two areas in southern Douglas County most often mentioned quality of life as the best thing about the Omaha area. These areas are Area E, which includes Millard, and Area I, which is in the southeast corner of the county.

Jobs and business opportunities finished as the top best aspect in Areas G and D. In Area D, jobs and business opportunities tied with schools.

No other item ranked as the most often mentioned item by more than one area. Respondents in Area H most often mentioned friendly people; in Area C it was entertainment and cultural activities; and in Washington County (Area A) it was shopping.

Table 7 - Respondents' Views of the Top Five Best Things About the Omaha Area by Geographic Area

	Metro Area		Area A		Area B		Area C		Area D		Area E	
	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank
Top five items:												
Schools	30.4	(1)	20.0	(5)	39.3	(1)	26.7	(3)	30.4	(1)	22.2	(4)
Quality of life	30.3	(2)	12.0	(N)	35.7	(2)	24.4	(5)	26.6	(3)	40.0	(1)
Friendly people	28.1	(3)	32.0	(3)	32.1	(3)	27.9	(2)	22.8	(4)	38.9	(2)
Jobs and business opportunities	26.4	(4)	24.0	(4)	14.3	(N)	25.6	(4)	30.4	(1)	32.2	(3)
Entertainment and cultural activities	20.6	(5)	40.0	(2)	3.6	(N)	34.9	(1)	11.4	(N)	18.9	(5)
Other items:												
Shopping			48.0	(1)	25.0	(4)			12.7	(5)		
Low cost of living					17.9	(5)						
Quality of the environment												
Housing					17.9	(5)						
	Area F		Area G		Area H		Area I		Area J		Area K	
	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank
Top five items:												
Schools	42.1	(1)	24.2	(3)	25.8	(2)	22.4	(3)	33.3	(1)	42.2	(1)
Quality of life	38.2	(2)	28.8	(2)	24.2	(3)	37.3	(1)	29.4	(2)	27.5	(3)
Friendly people	23.7	(3)	24.2	(3)	31.8	(1)	28.4	(2)	25.5	(4)	25.7	(5)
Jobs and business opportunities	22.4	(4)	31.8	(1)	24.2	(3)	20.9	(4)	27.5	(3)	26.6	(4)
Entertainment and cultural activities	14.5	(N)	19.7	(5)	10.6	(N)	13.4	(5)	21.6	(5)	32.1	(2)
Other items:												
Shopping	15.8	(5)			19.7	(5)	13.4	(5)				
Low cost of living												
Quality of the environment							13.4	(5)				
Housing												

(N) Not in area's top five.

The Worst Aspects by Area

The rankings for the worst aspects of the Omaha area are found in table 8. Drugs led the way as the most often mentioned item in 4 of the 11 areas: C, D, F and K.

Gangs were the top mentioned item in three areas: H and I in eastern Douglas County, and Area B in western Douglas County.

Area E in southwest Douglas County and its neighbor, Area J in western Sarpy County, are the two areas in which respondents gave high taxes as their top-ranked worst item in the Omaha area.

Washington County (Area A) residents mentioned crime most often. Residents of Area G were most likely to pick the condition of streets as the worst thing about the Omaha area.

Problems That Need to be Addressed in the Omaha Area

Table 9 on page 7 shows how Omaha area residents ranked local problems that need to be addressed. In contrast to the two other questions discussed above, there is a great deal of uniformity among regions of the Omaha area regarding which problems should be addressed. Drugs ranked first in all 11 areas in the metropolitan area sample, and gangs ranked as the second most frequently mentioned problem in all but two areas.

Endnote

1. For more detail on this topic, see the related Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 report on "Property Crime Victimization and Fear of Crime" (see back cover for a complete list of report topics).

Table 8 - Respondents' Views of the Top Five Worst Things About the Omaha Area by Geographic Area

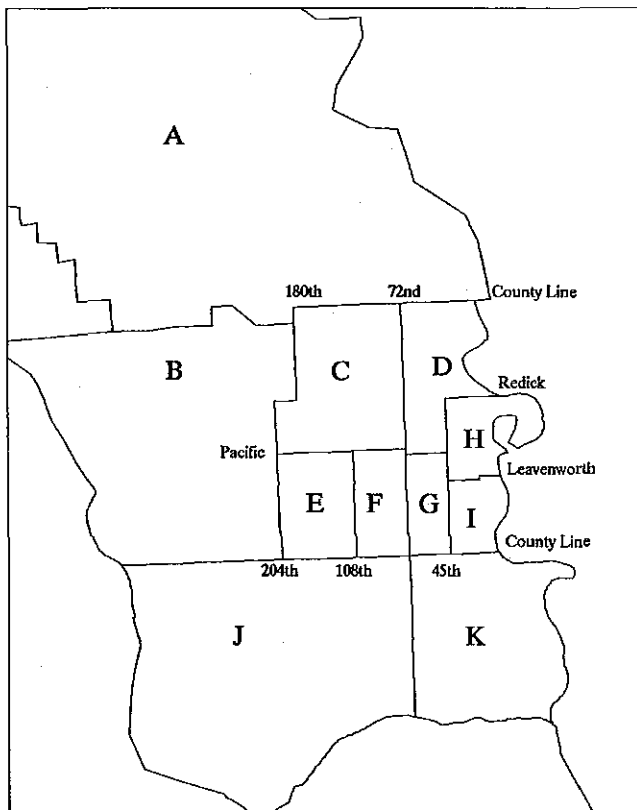
	Metro Area		Area A		Area B		Area C		Area D		Area E	
	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank
Top five items:												
Drugs	29.1	(1)	22.7	(3)	21.4	(2)	34.9	(1)	39.2	(1)	31.0	(3)
Gangs	28.1	(2)	27.3	(2)	28.6	(1)	30.2	(2)	24.1	(3)	35.7	(2)
High taxes	20.4	(3)	9.1	(N)	21.4	(2)	22.1	(3)	12.7	(5)	39.8	(1)
Crime	18.8	(4)	31.8	(1)	14.3	(4)	20.9	(4)	30.4	(2)	15.5	(5)
Street conditions	18.0	(5)	18.2	(5)	7.1	(N)	17.4	(5)	15.2	(4)	15.5	(5)
Other Items:												
Weather											19.0	(4)
No jobs or business opportunities					14.3	(4)						
Traffic congestion			22.7	(3)								
Run-down areas					14.3	(4)						
	Area F		Area G		Area H		Area I		Area J		Area K	
	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank
Top five items:												
Drugs	33.3	(1)	21.3	(2)	30.4	(2)	24.6	(3)	22.4	(2)	25.2	(1)
Gangs	32.0	(2)	21.3	(2)	33.3	(1)	30.4	(1)	22.4	(2)	22.4	(3)
High taxes	28.0	(3)	16.4	(5)	10.1	(N)	26.1	(2)	28.6	(1)	15.9	(N)
Crime	14.7	(5)	14.8	(N)	8.7	(N)	18.8	(4)	18.4	(4)	21.5	(4)
Street conditions	24.0	(4)	27.9	(1)	15.9	(4)	17.4	(5)	14.3	(N)	18.7	(N)
Other Items:												
Weather			21.3	(2)	14.5	(5)			18.4	(4)	23.4	(2)
No jobs or business opportunities					26.1	(3)						
Traffic congestion											19.6	(5)
Run-down areas												
(N) Not in area's top five.												

Table 9 - Respondents' Views of the Top Five Priority Problems to Address in the Omaha Area by Geographic Area

	Metro Area		Area A		Area B		Area C		Area D		Area E	
	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank
Top five items:												
Drugs	51.0	(1)	46.2	(1)	57.1	(1)	59.1	(1)	51.8	(1)	52.3	(1)
Gangs	38.9	(2)	19.2	(4)	53.6	(2)	35.2	(2)	38.8	(2)	38.6	(2)
Crime	19.6	(3)	30.8	(2)	10.7	(N)	19.3	(5)	25.9	(3)	25.0	(3)
High taxes	18.7	(4)	30.8	(2)	17.9	(4)	22.7	(3)	11.8	(N)	23.9	(4)
Homelessness	16.6	(5)	15.4	(N)	10.7	(N)	13.6	(N)	17.6	(4)	11.4	(N)
No jobs or business opportunities	16.6	(5)	19.2	(4)	17.9	(4)	20.5	(4)	14.1	(5)	13.6	(5)
Other Items:												
Youth needs					17.9	(4)						
Street conditions												
Quality of schools					21.4	(3)						

	Area F		Area G		Area H		Area I		Area J		Area K	
	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank
Top five items:												
Drugs	50.7	(1)	44.1	(1)	48.6	(1)	47.8	(1)	43.1	(1)	54.1	(1)
Gangs	36.0	(2)	42.6	(2)	40.3	(2)	42.0	(2)	31.4	(3)	43.2	(2)
Crime	25.3	(3)	13.2	(4)	18.1	(4)	15.9	(4)	9.8	(N)	18.0	(4)
High taxes	18.7	(4)	19.1	(3)	4.2	(N)	18.8	(3)	35.3	(2)	15.3	(5)
Homelessness	13.3	(N)	13.2	(4)	18.1	(4)	15.9	(4)	17.6	(N)	27.0	(3)
No jobs or business opportunities	18.7	(4)	19.1	(3)	29.2	(3)	15.9	(4)	7.8	(N)	9.9	(N)
Other Items:												
Youth needs												
Street conditions									21.6	(4)		
Quality of schools									19.6	(5)		

(N) Not in area's top five.

**Reference Map Showing Geographic Distribution of the Metropolitan Sample**

Area	Number of Respondents	Zip Code
A	27	68002, 68008, 68023, 68029, 68034, 68068
B	28	68007, 68022, 68064, 68069, 68116, 68118, 68130, 68135
C	90	68122, 68134, 68142, 68164
D	85	68104, 68112, 68152
E	92	68010, 68137, 68144, 68154
F	79	68114, 68124, 68127
G	68	68106, 68117, 68132
H	74	68102, 68110, 68111, 68131
I	72	68105, 68107, 68108
J	52	68028, 68046, 68059, 68128, 68136, 68138
K	112	68005, 68113, 68123, 68133, 68147, 68157

About the Omaha Conditions Survey

The Omaha Conditions Survey is part of an initiative at the Center for Public Affairs Research to monitor and improve the processes operating in Nebraska's urban areas by collecting quality information and making it accessible to those who need it. It is one component of the Nebraska Urban Conditions Research Program, which focuses on planning for the future in four key areas: economic and social conditions; minority conditions; social service delivery systems; and small town conditions.

Through the Omaha Conditions Survey, the Center for Public Affairs Research will annually gather data from a random sample of 800 persons in Douglas, Sarpy and Washington counties in Nebraska. In addition, a smaller sample of 200 individuals living in sub-areas of Omaha will be interviewed each year.

Each year's survey will focus on the public's perception of the quality of life in the Omaha area; satisfaction with community services, programs and facilities; and demographic features. In addition to these items, each annual survey will focus on a special topic such as employment and labor force experiences, health care, crime, or environmental concerns.

See the box at right for information on reports covering special topics from the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990.

Interested in Receiving Additional Reports from the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990?

Write or call the Center for Public Affairs Research, Peter Kiewit Conference Center, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182; (402) 595-2311 for one or more of the following reports:

- Survey Methodology
- Property Crime Victimization and Fear of Crime
- Labor Force Profile
- Opinions About Current Issues
- Citizen Evaluation of Services, Facilities and Programs

Published by the Center for Public Affairs Research (formerly Center for Applied Urban Research) and mailed free upon request. Copyright 1990 © Center for Public Affairs Research. All rights reserved. No part of this pub-

lication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (photocopying, electronic, mechanical, recording, or other) without the prior written permission of the copyright holder.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
Delbert D. Weber, Chancellor

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
AND COMMUNITY SERVICE
David W. Hinton, Dean

CENTER FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS
RESEARCH
Russell L. Smith, Director
Robert F. Blair, Research Associate
Joyce Carson, Word Processing Specialist

Raymond A. Clark, Senior Community Service
Associate
Jerome Deichert, Senior Research Associate
David Fifer, Research Associate
Patricia Funk, Consultant
Melanie Hayes, Staff Secretary
Tim K. Himberger, Information Specialist
Chris E. Marshall, Senior Research Associate
Betty Mayhew, Office Manager
Margaret McDonald Rasmussen, Editor
Alice Schumaker, Research Associate

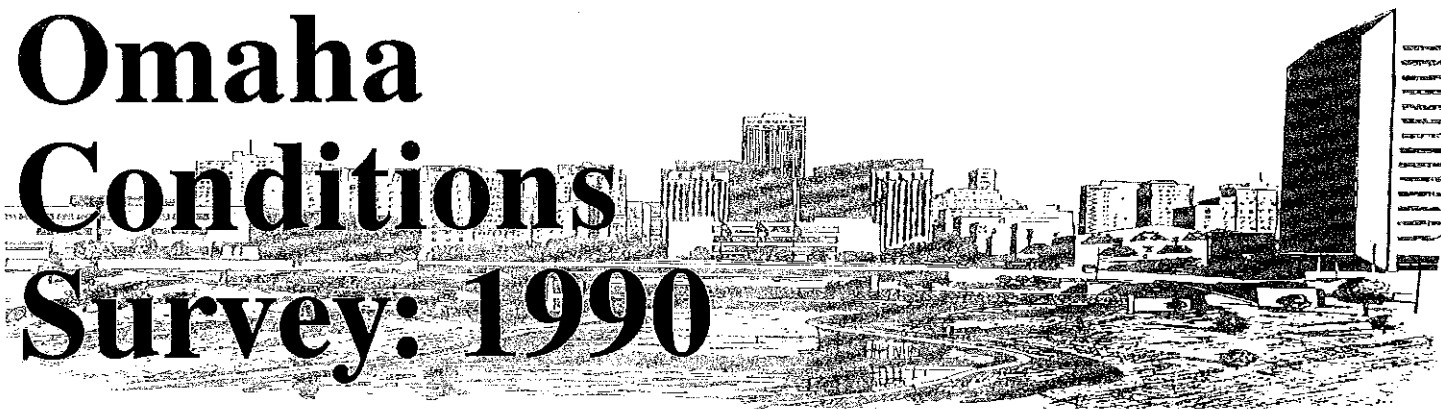
Joseph Baldassano, Graduate Assistant
Gregory Fant, Graduate Intern
Kelly Green, Student Intern
Kathryn Hegarty, Student Intern
Marie-Claude Lozier, Graduate Assistant



The University of Nebraska at
Omaha is an Equal
Opportunity/Affirmative Action
Educational Institution

Center for Public Affairs Research
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Peter Kiewit Conference Center
Omaha, Nebraska 68182

Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990



Labor Force Profile

by
David Fifer, Research Associate

Few statistics receive as much attention from as diverse an audience as do labor statistics. Businesses use labor statistics to help make decisions concerning site location and expansion. Governments use them to evaluate the need for and effects of economic development efforts. Schools develop curricula after using labor statistics to project future demand for workers with particular skills. Citizens use

labor force data to help decide what training to take or in what region to look for a job. And nearly everyone uses this information as a sort of barometer of an area's economic health.

Primary sources of labor force data include the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, state employment security agencies (in Nebraska, the Nebraska Department of Labor), and the U.S.

Bureau of the Census. These agencies regularly publish such data as employment by industry, hours worked, earnings, and unemployment. The amount of detail, however, is often limited for smaller geographic areas, such as cities. At the local level, information is not published on the underemployed, discouraged workers, multiple-job holders, holders of temporary and part-time jobs, and the characteristics of those individuals. The absence of such indicators makes it difficult for local leaders to fully assess the performance of the area's labor market or to develop policies to address needs.

With this in mind, the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 was designed to measure specific aspects of the Omaha area labor market not covered by regular government statistical programs. The findings are intended to supplement the statistics produced elsewhere to present a more complete picture of the Omaha labor market.

Analysis of an area's labor force usually begins with the classification of all persons aged 16 and older into one of three groups: the employed (persons with jobs), the unemployed (persons without jobs who are on temporary layoff, waiting to begin a new job, or looking for work), and those not in the labor force (persons without

Key Findings

- While the Omaha area's unemployment rate is low, about 61,000 workers are underemployed. An estimated 7,000 part-time workers want more hours, and 54,000 full-time workers feel they are overqualified for their jobs.
- Two out of five part-time workers wanting more hours are nonwhite.
- One out of 13 workers aged 18 to 64 is employed full time and has a household income of less than \$15,000 per year.
- About 6.7 percent of Omaha area workers hold more than one job, and 14.6 percent work part time. These percentages are down slightly from 1985.
- Lower than average labor force participation rates are found in east Douglas County.
- A higher than average proportion of self-employed workers is found in south and west Douglas County.
- The proportion of workers earning \$20,000 or more per year is higher in Douglas and Sarpy counties west of 72nd Street than elsewhere in the three-county area.

jobs who are not looking for work). Employed and unemployed persons comprise the labor force. The labor force participation rate is the percentage of all persons aged 16 and older in the labor force. The unemployment rate is the percentage of the labor force that is unemployed.

This Labor Force Profile is based on the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 metropolitan sample. The sample represents persons aged 18 and older in Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington counties. Because the sample includes persons aged 18 and older rather than aged 16 and older, labor force measures from the survey are not strictly comparable with official government labor statistics.

In addition, the sample includes military personnel not ordinarily counted in labor force statistics at the local level (although they are counted at the national level). Other than these differences, the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 labor force measures are consistent with the standard labor force definitions outlined above. Percentages that follow are based on the survey sample and are subject to sampling error (see the "Survey Methodology" report for complete in-

formation on the metropolitan sample and error levels). All counts in this report are estimates based on survey percentages and a baseline estimate of the total number of persons aged 18 and older in Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington counties (see box below).

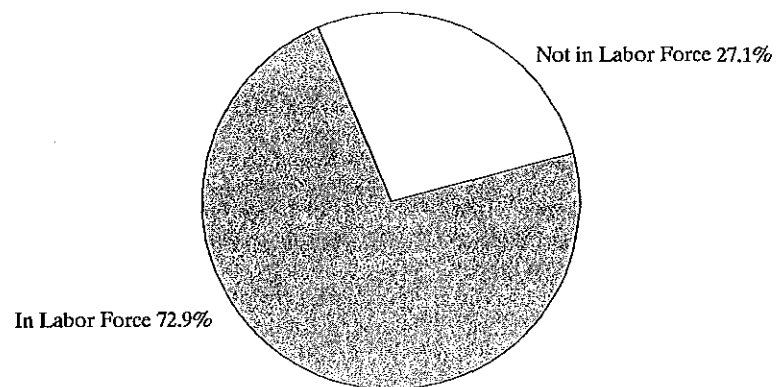
Labor Force Participation Rate

An estimated 385,000 persons aged 18 and older reside in the three-county Omaha area. The labor force par-

ticipation rate for this group, based on the survey data, is 72.9 percent. There are 280,700 persons aged 18 and older in the labor force (see figure 1).

Identification of labor force participation rates for different segments of the population can help identify groups that could be recruited for new jobs. While the labor force participation rates for Whites and nonwhites are not significantly different, men have a higher participation rate (83.8 percent) than do women (63.5 percent). Groups with higher levels of formal education also have higher

Figure 1 - Labor Force Participation, Persons 18 and Older



How Percentages and Counts in this Report Were Estimated

A baseline estimate of 385,000 persons aged 18 and older in the three-county Omaha area was developed using the following approach:

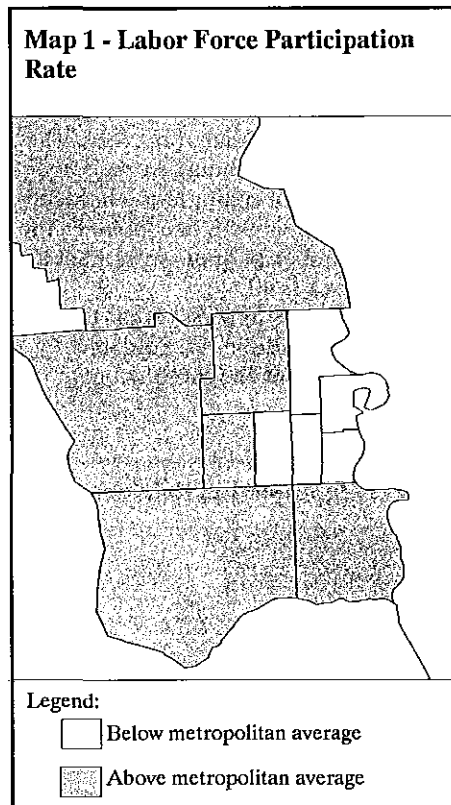
1. Estimates of the 1988 population, the percentage of population aged 17 and younger, and the annual population growth rate for each zip code area in Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington counties was obtained from CACI, Inc., of Fairfax, Virginia.
2. For each zip code area, the percentage aged 17 and younger was subtracted from the total population to produce an estimate of the population aged 18 and older in 1988. This was then multiplied by the annual growth rate to arrive at a 1989 population estimate of persons aged 18 and older in each zip code area. Zip code area data were summed to produce totals. From these data it was found that 71.7234 percent of the population in all the zip code areas is aged 18 and older and that the annual population growth rate is 0.5855 percent.
3. Zip code areas do not necessarily conform exactly to county boundaries. For this reason, an estimate of Nebraska's 1988 population by county published by the U.S. Bureau of the Census was used as a base rather than the sum of the zip code area populations. (The three-county area had a 1988 population of 533,600 according to the Bureau of the Census, while the sum of the zip code area populations from CACI was 530,366.) Multiplying the Census Bureau estimate of 533,600 by 71.7234 percent produced an estimate of 382,716 aged 18 and older in 1988. This, in turn, was multiplied by the aggregate annual growth rate for the zip code areas (0.5855 percent) to yield a 1989 estimate of 384,957. Finally, this figure was rounded to 385,000.

Percentages cited in this report are percentages of the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 metropolitan sample of 779 persons.

Counts in this report are estimated by multiplying the survey percentages and baseline estimate discussed above.

labor force participation rates. The rate for college graduates is 86.0 percent. People with some post-high school education have a 74.8 percent participation rate, and those with only a high school diploma have a 71.7 percent rate. The labor force participation rate for those who did not graduate from high school is 34.6 percent.

Map 1 shows in which areas the labor force participation rates are above and below the three-county average. (A reference map on page 7 shows the relationship of the areas to major street and county boundaries.)



Unemployment Rate

The survey unemployment rate is 3.4 percent. This means that of the 280,700 persons in the labor force, 271,200 are employed and 9,500 are unemployed (figure 2).

While the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 metropolitan sample was not large enough to produce detailed characteristics of the unemployed, some broad generalizations are possible.

Most of the unemployed are relatively young, with the majority between ages 25 and 34. The unemployment rate for those without high school diplomas is about three times that of those who finished high school. About three out of four unemployed are white.

Nonwhites generally have a higher unemployment rate than do Whites, but again the metropolitan sample was not large enough to sufficiently analyze this difference.¹

Individuals surveyed who were looking for a job were asked what they had been doing to find work. Placing or answering an ad was the most frequently mentioned, followed by checking with Nebraska Job Service. Other job search methods used included checking with an employer directly, checking with a private employment agency, and checking with friends or relatives.

Discouraged Workers and the Underemployed

An area's unemployment rate is often used as an indicator of idle labor capacity and hence labor availability for new or expanding business. While the unemployed are an easily identifiable and quantifiable group of potential labor, there are other groups of potential labor as well. Discouraged workers are persons without jobs who want jobs, but they are not looking because they believe nothing is available.

Because they are not seeking work, they are classified as not in the labor force. Underemployed persons have jobs, but their jobs may offer fewer hours than they would like, or the jobs may not fully utilize the workers' skills and training. Such individuals are still considered employed because they do have jobs. Both discouraged workers and the underemployed represent potential sources of labor, in addition to the unemployed, for new or expanding business.

Discouraged workers and the underemployed are somewhat difficult to count because, unlike the unemployed, there is no generally accepted definition of these statuses. For the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990, persons who said they wanted a job and were available for work but had not looked in the last four weeks are classified as discouraged workers. Persons who said they normally work part time and would like to be working an additional five or more hours per week are considered underemployed. Persons who said they had to settle for jobs for which they were overqualified because nothing better was available are also counted as underemployed.

Using these definitions, the Omaha area has an estimated 2,500 discouraged workers among those not in the labor force. In addition, there are an estimated 61,000 underemployed among the employed labor force. Of these underemployed, 7,000 normally work part time and want more hours. The remaining 54,000 work full time,

Figure 2 - Employed and Unemployed Labor Force, Persons 18 and Older

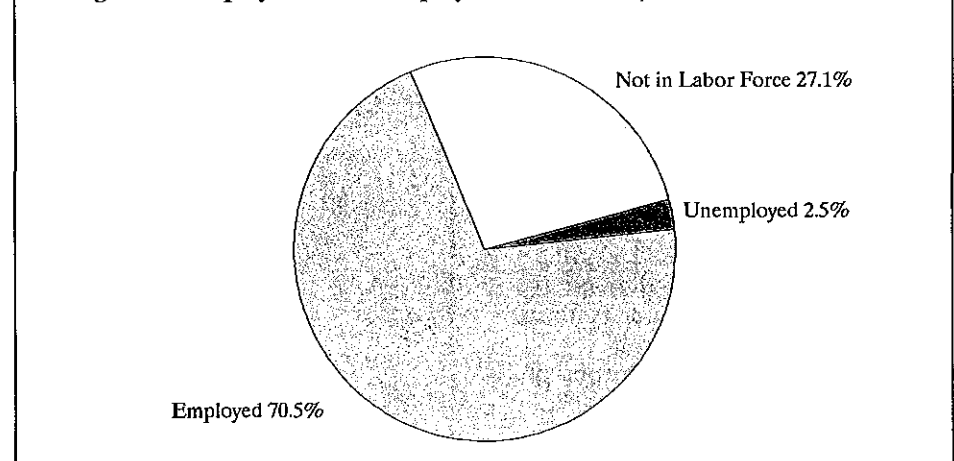
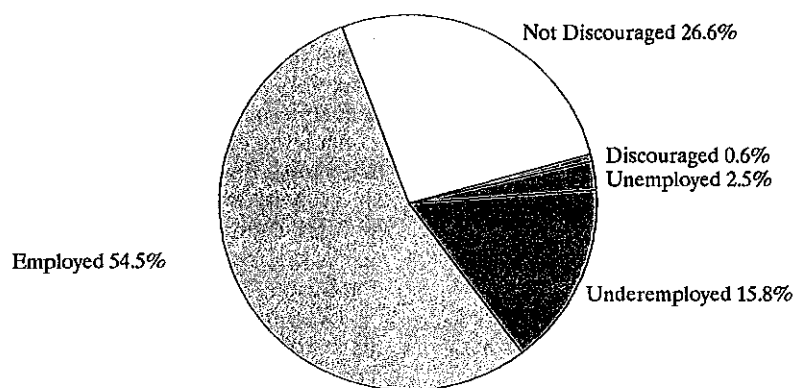


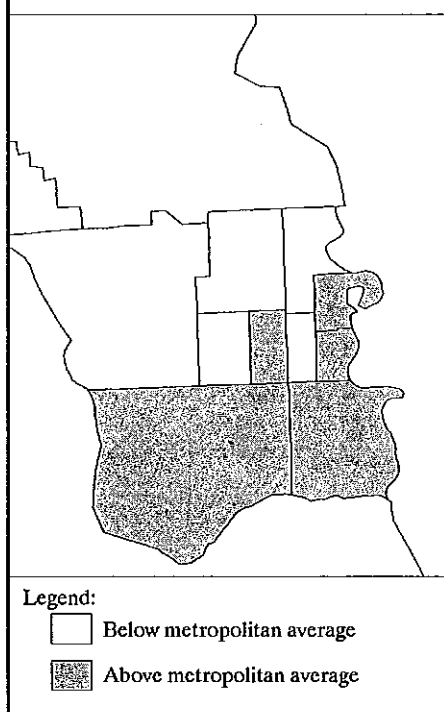
Figure 3 - Discouraged Workers and Underemployed, Persons 18 and Older

but feel they have had to settle for jobs for which they are overqualified because nothing better is available (figure 3).

The relatively low incidence of discouraged workers indicates that most people in the Omaha area who want a job can find some kind of work. This is consistent with the belief of many who feel the area may face a labor shortage in some occupations. On the other hand, there are an estimated 7,000 people working part time who want to work more hours. This suggests that Omaha currently enjoys a moderate surplus of workers desiring full-time rather than part-time work. Employers able to offer full-time jobs will probably have fewer difficulties recruiting workers than those offering part-time jobs. To the extent such employers recruit workers away from existing part-time jobs, any current labor shortage among employers of part-time workers will be exacerbated. Two out of five people working part time and wanting more hours are nonwhite, a disproportionately large number given their relatively small share of the area's total labor force.

Whether a person is actually overqualified for a particular job is clearly open to some interpretation. Nevertheless, a large proportion of the area's workers identify themselves as having to settle for jobs for which they are overqualified because nothing better is available. This suggests that the Omaha area may yet offer a surplus of labor with specialized skills. It might also indicate that Omaha offers a par-

ticular quality of life that induces people to remain in the area rather than relocate to another region where the skills they bring to the labor market might be more fully utilized. The incidence of workers considering themselves overqualified does not vary significantly by gender, race, or education. It does vary by age; 22.7 percent of workers aged 18 to 49 consider themselves overqualified for their jobs compared with 14.7 percent of workers aged 50 and older.

Map 2 - Underemployed Workers

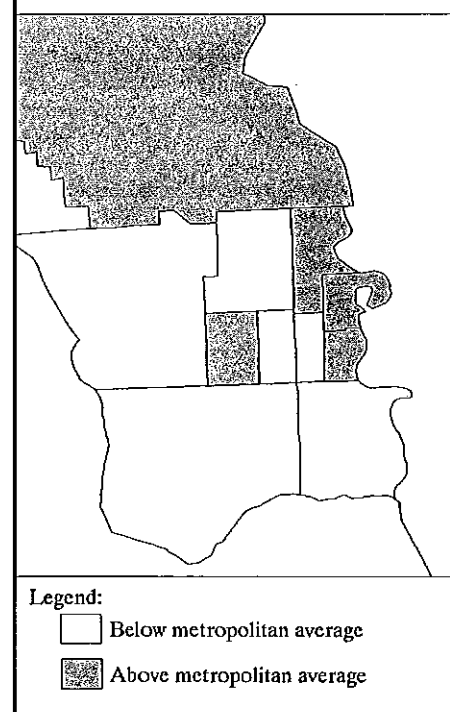
Map 2 shows in which areas the percentages of underemployed are above and below the three-county average.

Multiple-Job Holders

People hold more than one job for a variety of reasons. Some are unable to find suitable full-time work and instead take two part-time jobs. Persons with full-time jobs may take second jobs to supplement their incomes. Still others might operate their own businesses in addition to working for someone else.

Of the 271,200 persons in Omaha with jobs, 6.7 percent (18,200 persons) hold more than one job. Nearly all multiple-job holders surveyed (95.8 percent) report holding two jobs, with the remainder holding three jobs. The median number of hours worked in a normal week for multiple-job holders is 45. For people with one job only, the median number of hours worked in a normal week is 40.

Map 3 shows in which areas the percentages of multiple-job holders are above and below the three-county average.

Map 3 - Multiple-Job Holders

Self-Employed

The extent of self-employment and the degree to which it changes over time can serve as an indicator of an area's business climate.

Of the 271,200 persons in Omaha with jobs, 11.6 percent (31,500 persons) are self-employed. The remaining 88.4 percent of the employed labor force works for someone else. (Multiple-job holders who both are self-employed and work for someone else are classified according to the job that produces the greatest earnings.) The proportion of self-employed people holding more than one job is not significantly different than that of people working for someone else.

Almost one third (30.4 percent) of people aged 65 and older who have jobs are self-employed. Of the employed between ages 35 and 64, 16.4 percent are self-employed. Only 3.6 percent of workers aged 25 to 34 are self-employed, which is less than the percentage for the 18-to-24 age group (8.5 percent). A higher percentage of men with jobs (14.6 percent) are self-employed than women with

jobs (8.2 percent). There are no significant differences in the incidence of self-employment by race or education.

The self-employed tend to earn more than those who work for someone else. Close to half (44.8 percent) earn over \$30,000 per year. About one-fourth (26.0 percent) of those working for someone else are in that income category.

Map 4 shows in which areas the percentages of self-employed are above and below the three-county average.

Temporary Workers

Of the 239,700 employed persons who work for someone else (are not self-employed), 6.6 percent (15,800 persons) hold temporary jobs.

There are no significant differences in the incidence of temporary employment by age, race, gender, or education.

Map 5 shows in which areas the percentages of temporary workers are above and below the three-county average.

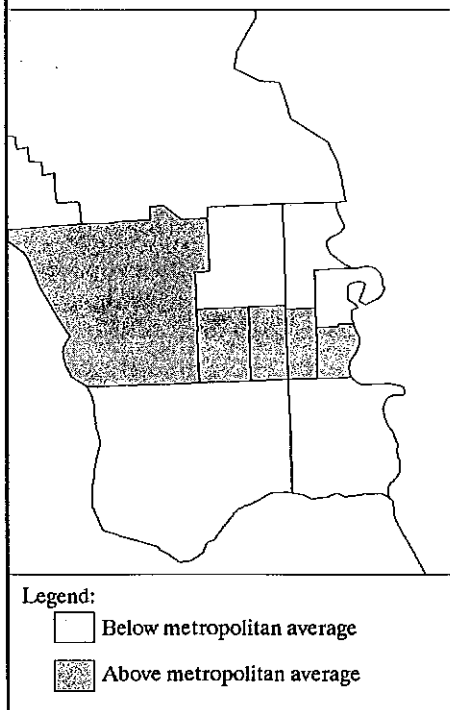
Part-Time Workers

Part-time work is defined as fewer than 35 hours of work per week. Of those who are employed, 14.6 percent (39,600 persons) work part-time. About four out of five (81.8 percent) part-time workers do so by choice; the remaining 18.2 percent would like to work additional hours.

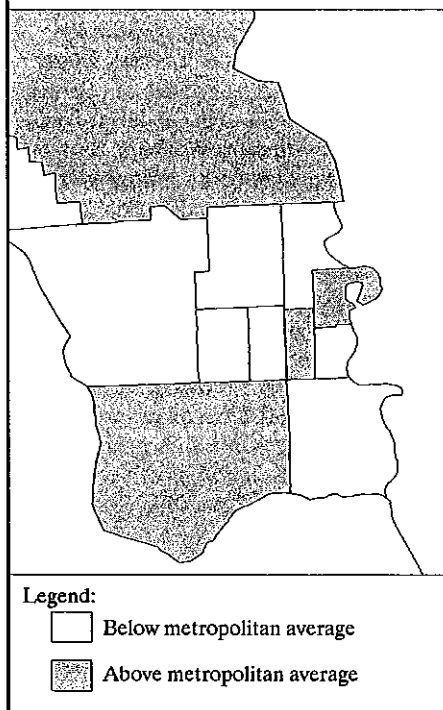
Part-time workers are most prevalent in the youngest and oldest age groups; 30.5 percent of workers aged 18 to 24 are part time as are 34.8 percent of workers aged 65 and older. Among workers aged 25 to 64, only 13.1 percent are part time. Part-time employment is also more prevalent among nonwhites (31.4 percent of the employed) than Whites (12.9 percent of the employed). By gender, 19.7 percent of employed women work part time compared to 10.2 percent of employed men. Nearly one-third (32.0 percent) of workers aged 18 and older without high school diplomas are part time; 16.3 percent of those who completed high school work part time. Only 8.2 percent of employed college graduates work part time.

Map 6 shows in which areas the percentages of part-time workers are

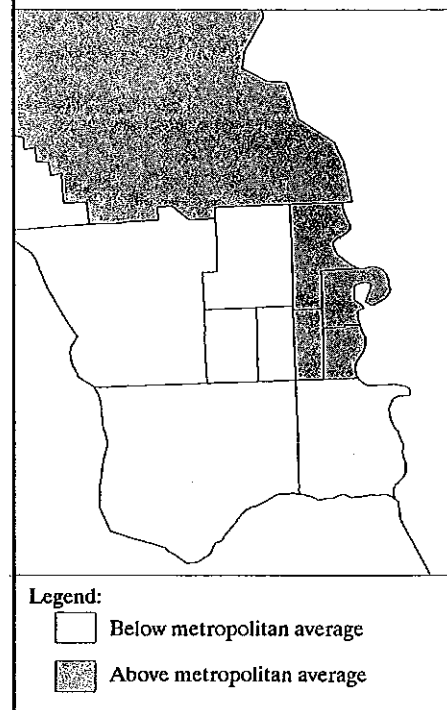
Map 4 - Self-Employed Workers



Map 5 - Temporary Workers



Map 6 - Part-Time Workers



above and below the three-county average.

Earnings

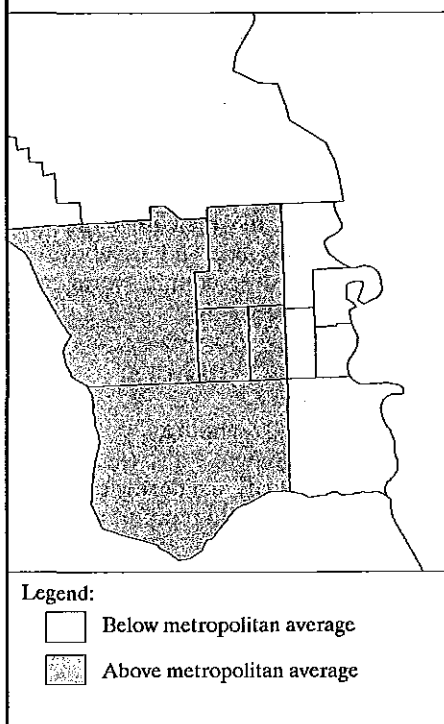
Twenty-eight percent of Omaha's employed labor force earns \$30,000 or more per year. Another 25.6 percent earns between \$20,000 and \$29,999. About one third (32.9 percent) earns from \$10,000 to \$19,999, and 13.5 percent earns less than \$10,000 per year. Table 1 shows the percentage of workers in each industry and occupation earning \$20,000 per year or more.

Map 7 shows in which areas the percentages of workers earning \$20,000 per year or more are above and below the three-county average.

Table 1 - Percentage of Employees Earning \$20,000 Per Year or More by Industry and Occupation

	Percentage
Industry:	
Transportation,	
Communication,	
Utilities	84.8
Farming	71.4
Government	64.1
Finance, Insurance,	
Real Estate	58.2
Manufacturing	52.6
Construction	
and Mining	48.1
Services	42.7
Wholesale and	
Retail Trade	40.0
Occupation:	
Farmer	80.0
Professional, Manager	79.2
Sales Person	69.7
Driver, Laborer	60.0
Technical Trade	
Worker, Craft Worker	52.3
Production Worker	23.1
Clerical Worker,	
Administrative	
Support Worker	23.1
Service Worker	16.2

Map 7 - Earnings of \$20,000 or More Per Year



Low-Income Workers

Just over 1 out of every 10 households surveyed (11.5 percent) reported that the total income of all adults in the household was less than \$15,000 per year. These households are categorized as low income. Many of these households consist of retired persons who are not in the labor force. To study low-income workers, data for respondents aged 65 and older were excluded. Labor force data for respondents aged 18 to 64 with household incomes under \$15,000 per year were then compared with data for persons of the same age group with annual household incomes of \$15,000 or more.

The labor force participation rate for persons aged 18 to 64 in low-income households is 74.1 percent. In households with incomes of \$15,000 and more, it is 87.2 percent. Some of this difference is attributable to a higher proportion of students in the low-income group.

Of all persons with jobs aged 18 to 64, 7.8 percent work full time and have household incomes of less than \$15,000 per year.

The unemployment rate and incidence of discouraged workers is not significantly different for the two income groups. However, the percentage of workers living in low-income households who are underemployed (39.0 percent) is nearly twice the percentage of workers with annual household incomes of \$15,000 or more who are underemployed (21.6 percent).

Industries with larger than average shares of workers in low-income households are Services, Trade, and Manufacturing. Occupations with larger-than-average shares of workers in low-income households include Service Workers, Clerical and Administrative Support Workers, and Professional and Managerial Workers. (Many of these Professional and Managerial Workers are in the Trade and Service industries.)

Trends in the Omaha Labor Market

In 1985 the Nebraska departments of Labor, Economic Development, and Social Services jointly conducted a statewide household survey that measured many of the same labor force indicators as the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990. There were 681 respondents to the 1985 survey who were aged 18 and older and who lived in the three-county Omaha area. Data for those respondents were compared with data from the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 to identify any notable changes over the last five years. This comparison revealed the following:

- The labor force participation rate in 1990 has not changed significantly from that of 1985.
- The incidence of discouraged workers is not significantly different in 1990 than it was in 1985, nor is the incidence of underemployed desiring more hours.
- There has been a decline in the percentage of full-time workers saying they had to settle for jobs for which they are overqualified. In 1985, 25.2 percent of the employed were in this group compared with 19.9 percent in 1990.

- The percentage of both self-employed workers and temporary workers is not significantly different in 1990 compared with 1985.
- The incidence of multiple-job holding has declined slightly. In 1985, 9.6 percent of the employed held more than one job compared with 6.7 percent in 1990.
- The incidence of part-time workers has also declined. In 1985, 18.3 percent of the employed worked part time. In 1990, 14.6 percent worked part time.

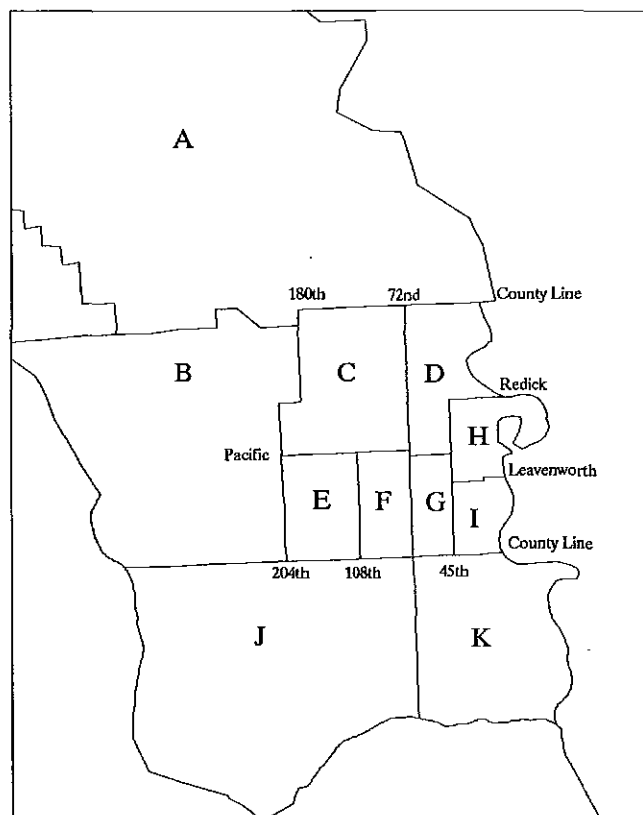
Summary

The Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 is the first of an annual series of surveys designed to collect and disseminate quality information about important aspects of life in the Omaha area. One of the objectives of the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 was to produce a detailed profile of the Omaha area labor force. This information is intended to supplement other available statistics to help leaders and citizens more completely understand the current Omaha area labor market. In addition, as future surveys are un-

dertaken, the data will help promote a better understanding of trends in the labor market over time.

Endnote

1. Analysis of the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 North Omaha sample will permit estimation of the unemployment rate for Blacks living in selected North Omaha census tracts. This information will be discussed in a future report focusing on the North Omaha area.



Reference Map Showing Geographic Distribution of the Metropolitan Sample

Area	Number of Respondents	Zip Code
A	27	68002, 68008, 68023, 68029, 68034, 68068
B	28	68007, 68022, 68064, 68069, 68116, 68118, 68130, 68135
C	90	68122, 68134, 68142, 68164
D	85	68104, 68112, 68152
E	92	68010, 68137, 68144, 68154
F	79	68114, 68124, 68127
G	68	68106, 68117, 68132
H	74	68102, 68110, 68111, 68131
I	72	68105, 68107, 68108
J	52	68028, 68046, 68059, 68128, 68136, 68138
K	112	68005, 68113, 68123, 68133, 68147, 68157

About the Omaha Conditions Survey

The Omaha Conditions Survey is part of an initiative at the Center for Public Affairs Research to monitor and improve the processes operating in Nebraska's urban areas by collecting quality information and making it accessible to those who need it. It is one component of the Nebraska Urban Conditions Research Program, which focuses on planning for the future in four key areas: economic and social conditions; minority conditions; social service delivery systems; and small town conditions.

Through the Omaha Conditions Survey, the Center for Public Affairs Research will annually gather data from a random sample of 800 persons in Douglas, Sarpy and Washington counties in Nebraska. In addition, a smaller sample of 200 individuals living in sub-areas of Omaha will be interviewed each year.

Each year's survey will focus on the public's perception of the quality of life in the Omaha area; satisfaction with community services, programs and facilities; and demographic features. In addition to these items, each annual survey will focus on a special topic such as employment and labor force experiences, health care, crime, or environmental concerns.

See the box at right for information on reports covering special topics from the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990.

Interested in Receiving Additional Reports from the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990?

Write or call the Center for Public Affairs Research, Peter Kiewit Conference Center, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182; (402) 595-2311 for one or more of the following reports:

- Survey Methodology
- Property Crime Victimization and Fear of Crime
- Omaha Area Residents Rate the Quality of Life
- Opinions About Current Issues
- Citizen Evaluation of Services, Facilities and Programs

Published by the Center for Public Affairs Research (formerly Center for Applied Urban Research) and mailed free upon request. Copyright 1990 © Center for Public Affairs Research. All rights reserved. No part of this pub-

lication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (photocopying, electronic, mechanical, recording, or other) without the prior written permission of the copyright holder.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
Delbert D. Weber, Chancellor

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
AND COMMUNITY SERVICE
David W. Hinton, Dean

CENTER FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS
RESEARCH

Russell L. Smith, Director
Robert F. Blair, Research Associate
Joyce Carson, Word Processing Specialist

Raymond A. Clark, Senior Community Service
Associate

Jerome Deichert, Senior Research Associate
David Fifer, Research Associate
Patricia Funk, Consultant
Melanie Hayes, Staff Secretary
Tim K. Himberger, Information Specialist
Chris E. Marshall, Senior Research Associate
Betty Mayhew, Office Manager
Margaret McDonald Rasmussen, Editor
Alice Schumaker, Research Associate

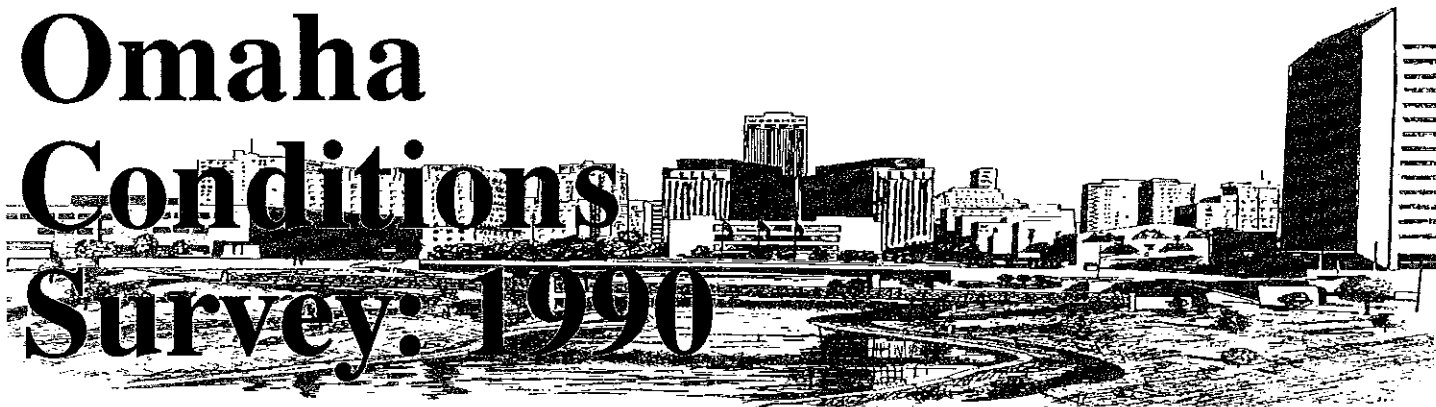
Joseph Baldassano, Graduate Assistant
Gregory Fant, Graduate Intern
Kelly Green, Student Intern
Kathryn Hegarty, Student Intern
Marie-Claude Lozier, Graduate Assistant



The University of Nebraska at
Omaha is an Equal
Opportunity/Affirmative Action
Educational Institution

Center for Public Affairs Research
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Peter Kiewit Conference Center
Omaha, Nebraska 68182

Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990



Citizen Evaluation of Services, Facilities and Programs

by
Russell L. Smith, Director
Center for Public Affairs Research

The Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 included a number of questions regarding residents' views of Omaha area services and facilities. Included in the survey were daily needs and services (garbage collection, shopping facilities, and electrical, gas and water service); public safety services;

streets and transportation; services and programs for special groups (senior citizens, teenagers, the homeless, and child care); education; and leisure time services (cultural events, recreation programs, and parks and playgrounds).

This report summarizes citizen feedback about selected services, facilities and programs in the Omaha area. Differences in satisfaction are also examined across respondent characteristics such as age, income, education and race. In some cases, maps are used to portray variations in service evaluations across geographic areas. A reference map is provided on page 7 and contains a list of the zip codes contained in each of the 11 survey analysis areas. The reference map also provides information on the number of respondents for each of the areas, as well as the location of major streets and county boundaries. See the report, "Survey Methodology," for a detailed discussion of how the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 was conducted.

Key Findings

- Omaha area residents gave positive ratings to the following categories of services: Daily needs (92.9 percent), public safety (91.6 percent), education (80.8 percent), leisure time (78.4 percent), special groups (57.9 percent), and streets and transportation (50.9 percent).
- Police protection was judged less positively (11.9 percent dissatisfied) than other public safety services. Dissatisfaction was highest among young, lower income, and black respondents, and those worried about crime.
- Within K-12 education, senior high schools received the lowest ratings.
- Activities for teenagers received the lowest ratings (49.3 percent dissatisfied) of any service in the special groups category.
- Over one-half (56.6 percent) said they were dissatisfied with the smoothness of streets; 33.2 percent were dissatisfied with traffic engineering.
- The proportion saying they were dissatisfied and that the service was important is 20 percent or higher for 7 of the 23 individual services.
- Black and younger respondents reported lower levels of satisfaction and higher levels of dissatisfaction.

The Value of Citizen Feedback

Citizen feedback can be an important part of any effort to better understand public services. It provides a consumer perspective about services for which, in many cases, the consumer has no alternative provider choice. In fact, the collection of certain qualitative information about

public services virtually requires citizen surveys.

If collected properly, this information can be far more representative of community feelings than complaint data or the sometimes limited personal observations of government employees and elected officials. Such people tend to hear most from those who are dissatisfied or who represent special interests. Surveys tap the opinions of both the dissatisfied and the satisfied. This latter group is especially important, as research shows that only about 20 percent of an area's residents will ever contact their local government for any reason at all.

While citizen-based assessments of public services are important to use, they are only one indicator of service effectiveness and quality. The views of businesses, for example, must also be considered since many public services are primarily consumed by businesses rather than individuals. Other sources of information, such as administrative records on citizen complaints, trained observer ratings, and efficiency measures, need to be considered as well.

On balance, however, performance-based information drawn from a citizen survey—such as that provided by the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990—is generally much clearer than are some of the more commonly used service measures, such as park acres mowed per dollar of funding or person-hours of labor, the degree of street smoothness as measured by a roughometer, and service response-time information. So strong is the case for citizen feedback that one recent study of local government use of citizen surveys found that over one-half of responding cities were using surveys as one indicator of the quality of local government services.¹

Perhaps the most important consideration is that citizen-based indicators of service performance have the potential to increase our understanding of what and how various governmental and non-governmental agencies are doing. This, in the long run, can prompt more citizen involvement in local public affairs.

Sources of Information About Service Delivery

There are two basic sources of information about agency outputs. One is the records kept by the organization. Although these records cannot tell everything that is happening, they are the most objective indicator of the service process.

A second source for assessing agency outputs is citizen evaluation studies. Three types of citizen evaluation designs can be identified. One is problem-centered evaluation, which focuses on direct judgments of the bureaucratic process itself. Such an evaluation would ask, for example, how efficiently the client thinks his or her problem was handled. A second approach is relationship-centered evaluation, which stresses how clients feel they were treated by agency personnel.

Outcome assessments comprise the third approach to examining agency service outputs. In this case, the focus is on client evaluations of the quality or effectiveness of the service rendered. This is the approach used by the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 and discussed in this report.

Greater Omaha Area Citizen Evaluations of Services

While citizen evaluations thus represent a major source of information about service performance, they have several limitations (see the box at right for a summary of the most important weaknesses). One particularly noteworthy limitation is that different client groups may have different expectations for a given service. As a result, two groups may offer different evaluations of a service even though they have been treated similarly in all aspects of the service delivery process. A second consideration is that not all services are used by each citizen. Finally, citizens often differ in the importance they attach to a given service. As a result, service satisfaction information could be misleading in the absence of information

on the importance or priority of the service to the consumer.

Measuring Service Satisfaction

The Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 asked respondents to indicate how satisfied they were with various services, facilities and programs. Each person was also asked how important the service, program or facility was to him or her. Thus, for 33 separate items, each person was first asked "How important is [each item] to you?" Response choices were "very important," "somewhat important," "slightly important," and "not important." Next, each respondent was asked "How satisfied are you with [each item] at the present time?" Response categories for this question were "very satisfied," "somewhat satisfied," "somewhat dissatisfied," and "very dissatisfied."

Responses to these two questions were charted on a 16-cell table divided into four major quadrants (see figure 1). Each response was located in one of the four cells—A,B,C

Limitations of Citizen Feedback on Services

- Not all services are used by each citizen.
- Businesses consume many services.
- Different groups have different expectations about the same service.
- There is a "halo effect," with clients tending to evaluate services positively.
- The accuracy of client perceptions declines for programs that do not involve close and regular client-agency interaction.
- Evaluations are best when conducted for specific program/service components.
- Evaluations may reflect factors not related to program or service performance.

or D—according to the satisfaction/dissatisfaction and importance/unimportance levels reported by each respondent.

As figure 1 shows, Cell A represents responses indicating satisfaction with a service that is not important to the respondent. Responses indicating satisfaction with an important service are assigned to Cell B. Cell C indicates dissatisfaction with a service that is not important, while Cell D represents responses of dissatisfaction with an important service.

While the classification approach presented in figure 1 reduces a complex set of citizen-based evaluations into a limited number of fields, it provides a clear perspective of major differences in citizen assessments of services. Responses that fall in Cell B, for example, can provide an overall feel for how well a particular service, facility or program is doing since that cell represents respondents who are satisfied with a service that is important to them. Cell D, on the other hand, can be seen as a "red flag"; responses in this cell represent consumers dissatisfied with a service that is important to them. If not addressed, such dissatisfaction could

produce a backlash. The proportion of responses in Cells A and C can be viewed as an indicator of the extent to which respondents attach little importance to a service.

Service, Facility and Program Ratings

Table 1 presents the percentage of responses in each of the four rating categories for 23 of the 33 services contained in the survey. (The remaining 10 cover important aspects of the overall quality of life, such as housing availability and price, and job and economic opportunities, and are examined in other Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 reports. See page 8 for a list of related reports.)

Looking first at Cell B, which contains responses indicating satisfaction with a service that is important, one sees that emergency rescue service is rated highest with 95.3 percent, and smoothness of streets and roads is rated lowest with 40.3 percent.

Five items—fire protection, emergency rescue service, electrical service, shopping for daily needs, and gas and water service—have 90 percent or more of their responses in

Cell B. Four services have between 80 and 89.9 percent of responses in Cell B, as well: police protection, garbage collection, elementary schools, and colleges and universities.

Cell D was characterized as a potential "red flag" cell. Items with more than one out of four responses falling in this category include smoothness of streets and roads (56.6 percent), traffic engineering (33.2 percent), activities for teenagers (49.3 percent), programs for needy citizens (37.9 percent), help for the homeless (44.4 percent), and quality of child care (25.1 percent).

Public Safety. Overall, the three services contained in this category have among the highest ratings (91.6 percent category average in Cell B) of the 23 items presented in table 1. As might be expected, services in this category are seen as important by almost all of those responding.

Police protection was judged somewhat less positively than fire and emergency medical services, as has been found in previous studies nationally. Roughly 1 in 10 of those responding (11.3 percent) said police protection was important to them, but that they were dissatisfied with police protection. Map 1 portrays areas in which responses are above and below the metropolitan average for Cell D (the actual proportion in each of the 11 areas falling in Cell D is reported in table 2). As can be seen in the map and table 2, dissatisfaction is highest in the eastern-most areas of Douglas County. (A reference map, on page 7, shows the relationship of the areas to major street and county boundaries.)

Younger adults (particularly those between 18 and 24) and those with household incomes of less than \$30,000 a year were more likely to give low ratings (Cell D) to the police. Black and white respondents also differed in their propensity to give low ratings. More than 1 in 3 of all Blacks' responses (34.5 percent) are in Cell D, while the proportion for Whites' responses is 1 in 10 (9.3 percent). In addition to these differences across population subgroups, respondents giving low

Figure 1 - Four Importance/Satisfaction Categories for Citizen Evaluation of Selected Services, Facilities and Programs

	Importance to Respondent			
	Not Important	Slightly Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Satisfaction of Respondent	Very Satisfied			
		A		B
	Somewhat Satisfied			
Satisfaction of Respondent	Somewhat Dissatisfied			
		C		D
	Very Dissatisfied			

Table 1 - Satisfaction and Importance Ratings for Selected Services, Facilities and Programs

Service/Facility/Program	Percentage of Responses in Category*			
	A (Satisfied, Unimportant)	B (Satisfied, Important)	C (Dissatisfied, Unimportant)	D (Dissatisfied, Important)
Public Safety:				
• Police protection (N=761)	2.5	84.6	1.6	11.3
• Fire protection (N=755)	1.6	94.8	0.3	3.3
• Emergency rescue service (N=726)	1.2	95.3	0.4	3.0
Category average	1.8	91.6	0.8	5.9
Streets/Transportation:				
• Public transportation (N=537)	25.1	49.2	8.4	17.3
• Smoothness of streets and roads (N=603)	1.3	40.3	1.8	56.6
• Traffic engineering (such as traffic light timing, placement, and so on) (N=643)	2.1	63.2	1.4	33.2
Category average	9.5	50.9	3.9	35.7
Daily Needs and Services:				
• Garbage collection (N=737)	4.7	88.9	0.5	5.8
• Electrical service (N=768)	1.4	94.0	0.1	4.4
• Shopping facilities for daily needs (N=774)	1.7	93.8	0.5	4.0
• Gas and water service (N=750)	1.2	94.9	0.3	3.6
Category average	2.3	92.9	0.4	4.5
Education:				
• Elementary schools (N=675)	3.6	80.3	2.1	14.1
• Junior high schools (N=622)	2.4	78.9	2.3	16.4
• Senior high schools (N=625)	3.0	76.6	2.4	17.9
• Colleges & universities (N=675)	2.5	87.3	1.6	8.6
Category average	2.9	80.8	2.1	14.3
Special Groups:				
• Activities for senior citizens (N=523)	11.9	66.7	2.5	18.9
• Activities for teenagers (N=588)	3.7	43.9	3.1	49.3
• Programs for needy citizens (N=625)	3.0	57.0	2.1	37.9
• Help for homeless (N=640)	3.3	49.8	2.5	44.4
• Availability of child care services (N=528)	8.5	64.2	2.8	24.4
• Quality of child care services (N=513)	6.2	65.9	2.7	25.1
Category average	6.1	57.9	2.6	33.3
Leisure Time:				
• Cultural events (N=702)	9.7	79.1	1.9	9.4
• Recreation programs and activities (N=726)	7.6	76.6	1.9	13.9
• Parks and playgrounds (N=737)	6.2	79.6	0.9	13.2
Category average	7.8	78.4	1.6	12.2

*A: Respondents were somewhat or very satisfied with services that were slightly or not important to them.

B: Respondents were somewhat or very satisfied with services that were somewhat or very important to them.

C: Respondents were somewhat or very dissatisfied with services that were slightly or not important to them.

D: Respondents were somewhat or very dissatisfied with services that were somewhat or very important to them.

Source: Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990, Center for Public Affairs Research, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

ratings (Cell D) on police protection tended to be more likely to say they were "very worried" about crime.

Streets and Transportation. As is almost always the case in general citizen surveys, streets and transportation received the lowest overall ratings. For the three services in this category, about one-half (50.9 percent) of the respondents indicated they were satisfied and that the services were important. Over one-third (35.7 percent) said they were dissatis-

fied and that the services were important to them.

Public transportation has the smallest proportion of responses in Cell B, coupled with a moderate proportion of responses in Cell D (17.3 percent). The primary reason for this pattern is that 33.5 percent of the respondents indicated public transportation was not important to them. No other service rating approaches this level. Among respondents taking buses to their jobs, 21.7 percent indicated they were dissatis-

fied and that public transportation was important to them.

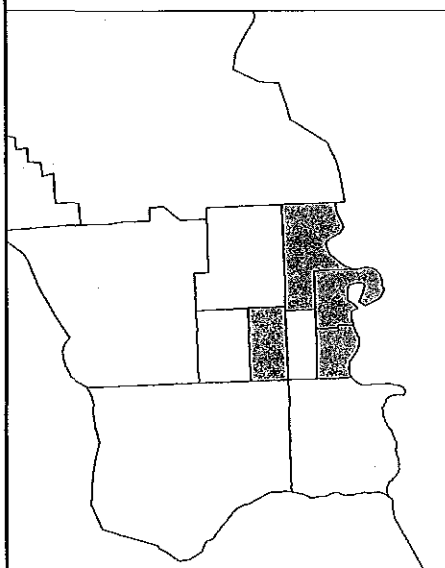
A majority of those responding to the survey—56.6 percent—gave low ratings to the smoothness of streets. Map 2 shows those areas where the percentage of Cell D responses is above or below the metropolitan average (see table 2 for the exact proportions). As can be seen, the areas of Douglas and Sarpy counties east of 72nd Street are above the metropolitan average for dissatisfaction with street smoothness. The lowest ratings are in Areas D, H and I. No statistically significant differences in ratings for this service were found across age, education, income or racial groups.

Traffic engineering, although rated more favorably than the smoothness of streets, generally followed the same pattern.

Daily Needs and Services. The four services in this category—garbage collection, electrical service, daily shopping facilities, and gas and water—received the highest ratings, as indicated by the 92.9 percent category average in Cell B. No statistically significant differences in ratings were found across age, income, or education groups. The one exception is for shopping, with black respondents being three times more likely than white respondents to say they were dissatisfied and that shopping facilities for daily needs were important.

Education. Elementary schools and colleges and universities are two of nine services to have 80 percent or more of responses in Cell B. Junior and senior high schools received slightly lower ratings, but they received good ratings from more than

Map 1 - Percentage of Respondents Dissatisfied with Police Protection*

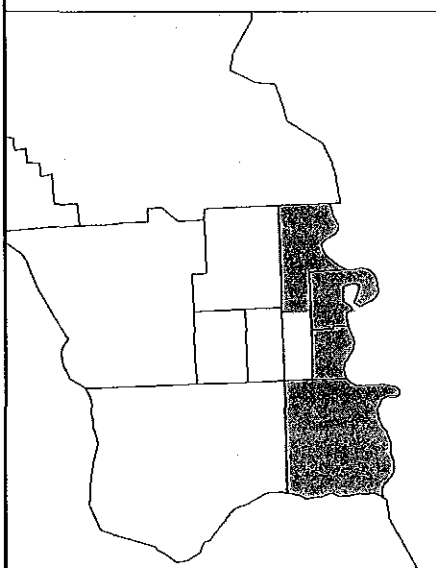


Legend:

- ☐ Below metropolitan average
- ☒ Above metropolitan average

*Respondents reporting they were dissatisfied with the service and that it was important to them.

Map 2 - Percentage of Respondents Dissatisfied with Smoothness of Streets*



Legend:

- ☐ Below metropolitan average
- ☒ Above metropolitan average

*Respondents reporting they were dissatisfied with the service and that it was important to them.

Table 2 - Percentage of Respondents Dissatisfied with Four Services by Area*

Service	A	B	C	D	E	Area F	G	H	I	J	K
Police protection	4.2	7.7	8.1	12.9	11.2	15.6	7.5	23.0	12.7	7.7	8.2
Smoothness of streets	40.7	51.9	44.9	60.7	56.0	54.4	55.2	68.5	68.6	51.9	57.3
Senior high schools	4.8	10.5	22.2	14.7	15.7	15.6	18.5	32.2	21.0	14.0	15.1
Child care availability	11.1	25.0	24.1	28.8	19.3	26.3	17.8	40.0	23.9	30.0	16.9

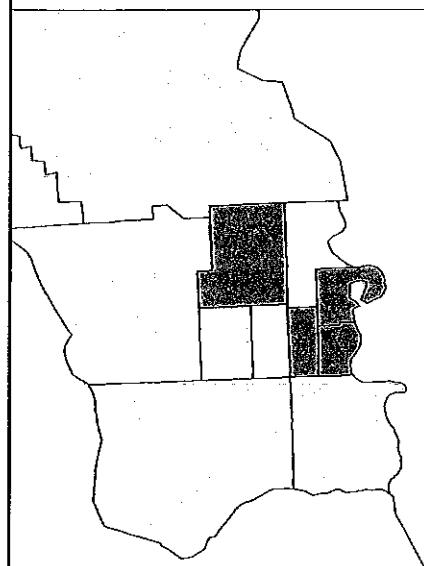
*Respondents reporting they were dissatisfied with the service and that it was important to them.

three-fourths (78.9 and 76.7 percent, respectively) of those responding.

For the K-12 levels, black respondents were more than twice as likely to give low ratings to schools, as were those with household incomes of less than \$30,000. Respondents with higher levels of education were more likely than those with lower levels to give good ratings to schools. Interestingly, respondents with school-age children do not statistically differ in their evaluation of schools from those without school-age children.

Map 3 illustrates some of the differences in school evaluations for each of the survey analysis areas, and shows which areas are above and below the average metropolitan dissatisfaction level for senior high schools. Areas C, H and I are above the metropolitan average. As can be seen in table 2, Area H in North Omaha has the highest proportion of responses in Cell D regarding senior high schools (32.2 percent).

Map 3 - Percentage of Respondents Dissatisfied with Senior High Schools*



Legend:

- ☐ Below metropolitan average
- ☒ Above metropolitan average

*Respondents reporting they were dissatisfied with the service and that it was important to them.

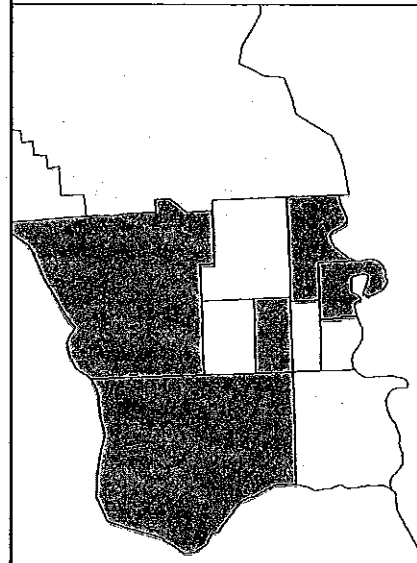
Special Groups. This category of services received the second lowest overall rating, with a category average of 57.9 percent in Cell B and 33.3 percent in Cell D. Activities for senior citizens received the highest rating of services in this category. Among respondents over age 65, ratings for senior citizen activities were even more positive than for all respondents (12.6 percent in Cell D). Activities for teenagers received the lowest rating (49.3 percent in Cell D).

Several statistically significant differences in ratings were found for different population sub-groups. For each of the services—senior and teenager activities, and help for the needy and homeless—black respondents were generally about twice as likely as white respondents to give low ratings by indicating the item was important but that they were dissatisfied. For activities for teenagers, those over 65 years of age were much less likely to give low ratings (30.9 percent in Cell D). Finally, for programs for the needy, those with lower and higher levels of education were more likely to give low ratings, while those with high school degrees and some college were more likely to express satisfaction.

With the exception of senior citizen activities, child care availability and quality received the best ratings of services in this category. When the ratings of respondents with children under the age of 5 are compared with the ratings of all respondents, even more satisfaction is evidenced. The proportion of these parents saying the service was important to them and they were satisfied with the quality is 70.6 percent (versus 65.9 percent for all respondents), and the percentage giving high ratings to availability is 68.2 (versus 64.2). While no statistically significant differences were found across income and education levels, younger and black respondents were more likely to say they were dissatisfied and that the service was important. Some variations also exist across geographic areas, as map 4 illustrates.

Leisure Time. Just under 10 percent of the respondents characterized services in this category as not that

Map 4 - Percentage of Respondents Dissatisfied with Child Care Availability*



Legend:

- ☐ Below metropolitan average
- ☒ Above metropolitan average

*Respondents reporting they were dissatisfied with the service and that it was important to them.

important (9.4 percent), second only to public transportation. Among the three services—cultural events, recreation, and parks and playgrounds—the latter are slightly more likely to be viewed as important.

Slightly less than 80 percent of those responding said they were satisfied with cultural events and that they were important. While evaluations didn't differ across income and educational levels, young (especially those aged 25-34) and black respondents were more likely to say they were dissatisfied.

Similar patterns exist for the other two services in the leisure time category. However, respondents with higher levels of education were more likely to report being dissatisfied with parks and playgrounds.

Summary

Overall, residents of Omaha gave high marks to the selected services, programs and facilities profiled in

this report. Among the twenty-three items examined, the highest ratings went to services that meet daily and public safety needs. As in most communities, smoothness of streets and traffic engineering received the lowest evaluations, as measured by the proportion of responses in Cell D. These were closely followed by services and programs for special groups.

Earlier, the proportion of respondents who said they were dissatisfied with a service that was important to them was characterized as a potential "red flag" worthy of additional assessment. If a threshold of 10 percent in Cell D were used as a guide, then 16 of the 23 services would be candidates for further assessment. If a threshold of 20 percent were used as a guide, the list would be cut to seven services.

While community leaders will ultimately have to decide what threshold is used, it is clear that some services in the Omaha area need to be examined in light of these community ratings.

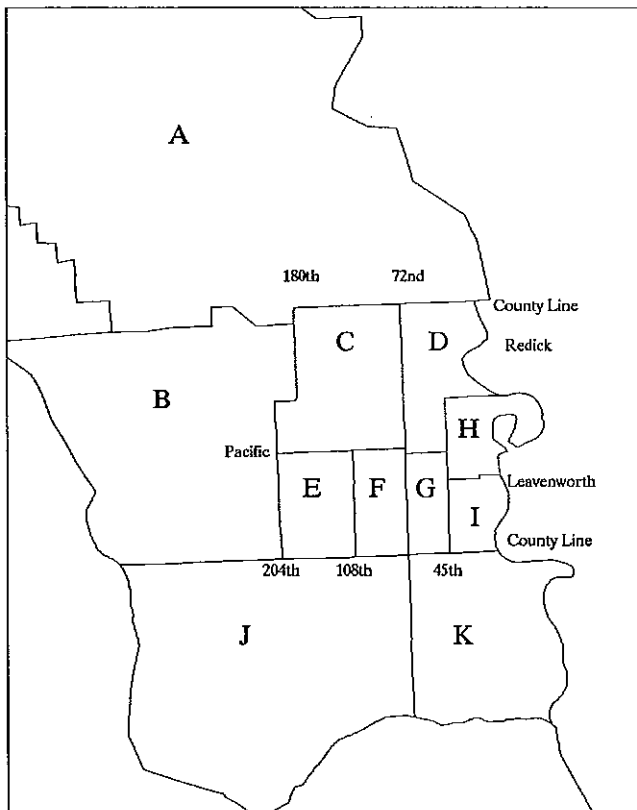
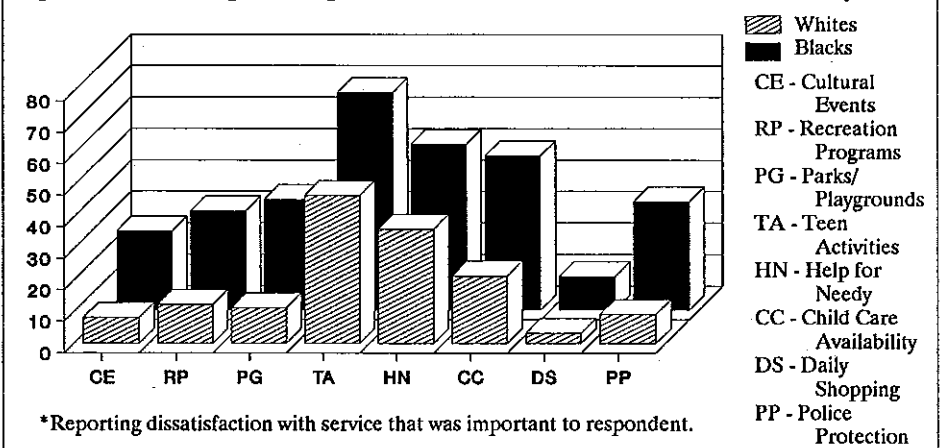
In conclusion, the higher levels of dissatisfaction in certain geographical areas—particularly those east of 72nd Street in Douglas County—and the lower ratings given to certain services by Blacks and younger respondents warrant attention. In particular, the service evaluations profiled in this report need to be supplemented with objective information on the delivery

of services. More detailed service information also needs to be developed to better focus in on specific aspects of services that respondents would like to see improved.

Endnote

1. David R. Morgan. 1984. *Managing Urban America*. 2nd edition. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company; 160.

Figure 2 - Percentage of Respondents Dissatisfied with Selected Services by Race*



Reference Map Showing Geographic Distribution of the Metropolitan Sample

Area	Number of Respondents	Zip Code
A	27	68002, 68008, 68023, 68029, 68034, 68068
B	28	68007, 68022, 68064, 68069, 68116, 68118, 68130, 68135
C	90	68122, 68134, 68142, 68164
D	85	68104, 68112, 68152
E	92	68010, 68137, 68144, 68154
F	79	68114, 68124, 68127
G	68	68106, 68117, 68132
H	74	68102, 68110, 68111, 68131
I	72	68105, 68107, 68108
J	52	68028, 68046, 68059, 68128, 68136, 68138
K	112	68005, 68113, 68123, 68133, 68147, 68157

About the Omaha Conditions Survey

The Omaha Conditions Survey is part of an initiative at the Center for Public Affairs Research to monitor and improve the processes operating in Nebraska's urban areas by collecting quality information and making it accessible to those who need it. It is one component of the Nebraska Urban Conditions Research Program, which focuses on planning for the future in four key areas: economic and social conditions; minority conditions; social service delivery systems; and small town conditions.

Through the Omaha Conditions Survey, the Center for Public Affairs Research will annually gather data from a random sample of 800 persons in Douglas, Sarpy and Washington counties in Nebraska. In addition, a smaller sample of 200 individuals living in sub-areas of Omaha will be interviewed each year.

Each year's survey will focus on the public's perception of the quality of life in the Omaha area; satisfaction with community services, programs and facilities; and demographic features. In addition to these items, each annual survey will focus on a special topic such as employment and labor force experiences, health care, crime, or environmental concerns.

See the box at right for information on reports covering special topics from the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990.

Interested in Receiving Additional Reports from the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990?

Write or call the Center for Public Affairs Research, Peter Kiewit Conference Center, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182; (402) 595-2311 for one or more of the following reports:

- Survey Methodology
- Property Crime Victimization and Fear of Crime
- Opinions About Current Issues
- Omaha Area Residents Rate the Quality of Life
- Characteristics and Experiences of the Omaha Area Labor Force

Published by the Center for Public Affairs Research (formerly Center for Applied Urban Research) and mailed free upon request. Copyright 1990 © Center for Public Affairs Research. All rights reserved. No part of this pub-

lication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (photocopying, electronic, mechanical, recording, or other) without the prior written permission of the copyright holder.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
Delbert D. Weber, Chancellor

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
AND COMMUNITY SERVICE
David W. Hinton, Dean

CENTER FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS
RESEARCH
Russell L. Smith, Director
Robert F. Blair, Research Associate
Joyce Carson, Word Processing Specialist

Raymond A. Clark, Senior Community Service Associate
Jerome Deichert, Senior Research Associate
David Fifer, Research Associate
Patricia Funk, Consultant
Melanie Hayes, Staff Secretary
Tim K. Humberger, Information Specialist
Chris E. Marshall, Senior Research Associate
Betty Mayhew, Office Manager
Margaret McDonald Rasmussen, Editor
Alice Schumaker, Research Associate

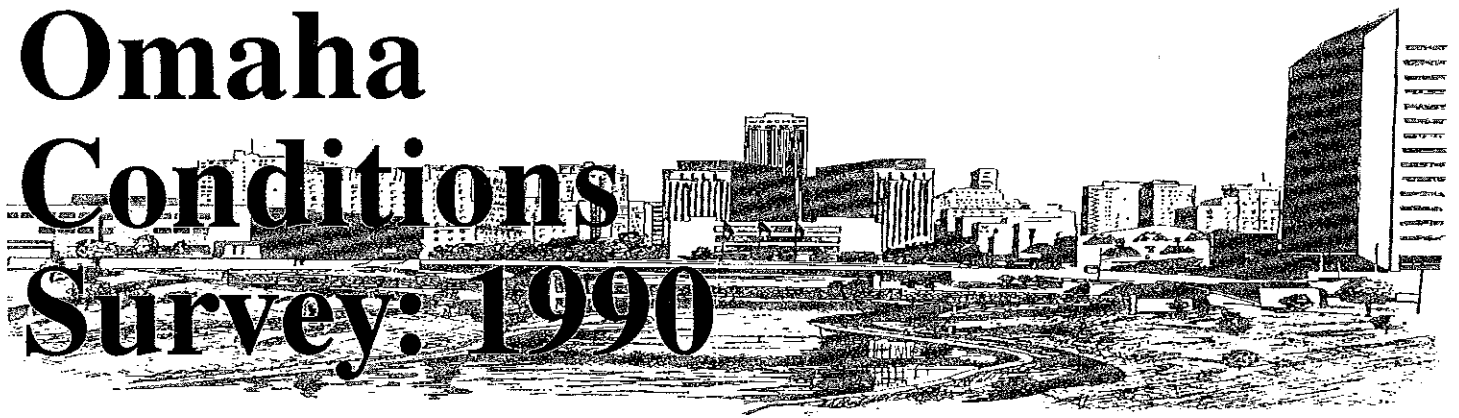
Joseph Baldassano, Graduate Assistant
Gregory Fant, Graduate Intern
Kelly Green, Student Intern
Kathryn Hegarty, Student Intern
Marie-Claude Lozier, Graduate Assistant



The University of Nebraska at
Omaha is an Equal
Opportunity/Affirmative Action
Educational Institution

Center for Public Affairs Research
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Peter Kiewit Conference Center
Omaha, Nebraska 68182

Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990



Crime in the Omaha Area: Perceptions, Protective Measures, and Victimization

by

Chris E. Marshall, Senior Research Associate
Center for Public Affairs Research

One of the detailed topics addressed by the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 was crime. Questions in this portion of the survey covered: (1) fear of crime; (2) perceptions of change in the crime situation; (3) measures taken by residents to protect themselves from crime; and

(4) levels of victimization for certain property crimes. This report summarizes information for the Omaha area and examines factors such as age, race, household income, education, gender, and location in the Omaha area to uncover possible patterns in the survey responses.

Perceptions of Crime in the Omaha Area

Fear of Crime in Omaha

Table 1 portrays information on the respondents' fear of crime. It shows that 47.0 percent said that they were very worried about crime in the Omaha area. Only 8.4 percent said they were not worried at all.

Some differences in fear of crime are evident across demographic factors. For example, nonwhite residents are 1.6 times more likely than white residents to be very worried about crime. Additionally, as income level increases, the likelihood that the respondent is very worried about crime decreases. As level of education increases, the percentage of respondents very worried about crime also decreases.

Gender also appears to have a real impact on reported fear of crime; female respondents were 1.5 times more likely than males to report that they were very worried about crime. Age has no significant influence upon the respondents' fear of crime.

Key Findings

- 91.5 percent of Omaha area respondents are worried to some extent about crime.
- Nonwhite and female respondents are the most likely to be very worried about crime.
- 73.8 percent of the respondents feel that the crime situation in the Omaha area has gotten worse.
- 9.5 percent of the respondents report carrying a weapon or other instrument for defense.
- Those respondents very worried about crime are twice as likely as those a little worried about crime to carry a weapon or other instrument for defense.
- Females are more than twice as likely as males to report carrying a weapon or other instrument for defense.
- Almost half of the respondents have recently taken at least one new measure to protect themselves from crime.
- Nonwhite Omaha area respondents are more likely than white respondents to have been victimized in three of the four crimes examined.

Table 1 - Responses to the Following Question: "Are you very worried, a little worried, or not at all worried about crime?"

	Percentage of Respondents		
	Very Worried	A Little Worried	Not At All Worried
Total sample*	47.0	44.5	8.4
Age:			
18 - 34	45.6	47.0	7.4
35 - 64	45.7	44.3	10.0
65 and over	55.0	38.8	6.2
Race:†			
White	44.7	46.5	8.0
Nonwhite	70.4	25.4	4.2
Household income:†			
Under \$20,000	56.9	35.8	7.3
\$20,000 - \$39,999	46.6	43.8	9.5
\$40,000 and over	35.2	56.0	8.8
Education:†			
No high school degree	65.4	29.6	4.9
High school degree only	54.0	36.6	9.4
At least some college	40.7	50.8	8.5
Sex:†			
Male	36.4	52.9	10.6
Female	56.2	37.4	6.4

*One respondent who answered "Don't Know" composed 0.1 percent of the total sample; this response was not include in the table.

†Differences across categories are statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level of significance.

Measures Taken by Omaha Residents to Protect Themselves from Crime

Several items of the phone interview looked into actions that people take because of their concern over crime. Thirteen activities were presented to the respondents, and for each activity respondents were asked: (1) whether they do this now, and (2) whether they have done this in the past. Table 2 demonstrates that only in the cases of keeping a dog for protection and carrying a whistle have the overall percentages taking these self-protective measures declined; for all other activities, the self-reported percentages increased.

Location and Self-Protective Measures

Three activities have different levels of reported use in various locations in the research area, as table 3 shows. (A reference map of the survey area is presented on page 6.) Respondents in Area F are most likely to keep residence lights on at night and have special locks installed; those in Area A (Washington County) are least likely to use these protective measures. Respondents in Area H are most likely to keep a gun for protection; those in Area E are the least likely to do so.

Perceptions of Change in the Omaha Area's Crime Situation

Residents interviewed in the survey were asked to indicate whether they felt the crime situation in the Omaha area has changed in the past few years for the better, remained about the same, or changed for the worse. Only a very small percentage of those responding—2.7 percent—felt that the crime situation had gotten better; 19.8 percent felt that the situation had remained the same. The vast majority, 73.8 percent, perceived of the crime situation in the Omaha area as having gotten worse.

None of the demographic factors—age, race, household income, education, gender, or location in the Omaha area—had a significant impact upon the respondents' perceptions about the change in crime.

Table 2 - Percentage of Omaha Area Residents Now Taking or Having Previously Taken Crime Preventing Actions

	Percentage Now Taking the Action	Percentage Having Taken the Action in the Past
Lock residence at night	96.8	87.4
Let neighbors know if gone for an extended period of time	82.2	75.4
Keep residence lights on at night	55.3	47.7
Keep a dog for protection	26.1	31.3
Walk only with others in neighborhood at night	38.3	34.2
Keep a gun for protection	20.4	19.2
Have special locks installed	48.4	37.0
Carry weapon or other instrument for defense	9.5	8.6
Carry mace or other repellent	8.0	6.7
Have burglar alarm installed	12.3	8.5
Carry whistle on person or in car	7.1	8.1
Belong to neighborhood crime watch	27.2	19.4
Take other measures not previously mentioned	15.8	9.7

Table 3 - Percentage of Responses to Key Questions by Zip Code Area

	Zip Code Area*											
	Metro Area	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Current Measures (%)												
Lock residence at night	96.8	92.6	89.3	98.9	97.6	98.9	97.4	97.0	98.6	97.2	94.2	96.4
Let neighbors know if gone	82.2	85.2	82.1	82.0	85.7	83.5	84.6	79.1	70.3	76.4	82.7	91.0
Keep residence lights on at night [†]	55.3	33.3	46.4	61.1	58.8	53.3	67.9	63.2	62.2	48.6	40.4	50.5
Keep a dog for protection	26.1	29.6	28.6	31.5	34.5	24.4	21.8	20.6	18.9	23.6	34.6	24.1
Walk with others at night	38.3	46.2	39.3	48.8	41.9	34.1	37.3	39.0	30.3	36.9	38.8	37.0
Keep a gun for protection [†]	20.4	25.9	10.7	19.1	24.7	7.9	17.1	18.2	36.5	23.6	15.4	22.9
Have special locks installed [†]	48.4	11.1	39.3	54.4	54.1	46.2	58.4	50.0	54.1	52.8	38.5	42.9
Carry a weapon for defense	9.5	7.4	10.7	7.8	9.4	3.3	6.6	13.4	14.9	13.9	9.6	9.9
Carry mace or other repellent	8.0	3.7	0.0	8.9	4.7	3.3	10.5	14.9	8.1	11.3	9.8	8.1
Have burglar alarm installed	12.3	3.7	7.1	12.2	15.3	12.1	15.4	10.8	20.5	6.9	9.6	11.6
Carry a whistle	7.1	11.5	10.7	6.7	4.7	4.3	3.9	2.9	10.8	13.9	9.6	6.3
Belong to neighborhood watch	27.2	14.8	21.4	25.6	33.3	25.0	26.0	23.9	25.7	26.8	25.0	35.1
Take other measures	15.8	7.4	7.1	15.6	16.5	13.0	17.9	11.8	18.9	16.7	21.2	17.9
Victimization (%)												
Burglary, complete	7.6	7.4	7.1	7.8	11.8	3.3	7.6	5.9	14.9	8.3	5.8	4.5
Burglary, attempted	6.4	0.0	3.6	3.3	9.4	3.3	7.6	5.9	12.2	8.3	3.8	7.1
Household larceny [†]	14.9	11.1	3.6	16.7	16.5	9.8	11.4	11.8	31.1	12.5	13.5	16.1
Personal larceny	5.6	0.0	10.7	7.8	7.1	6.5	5.1	5.9	5.4	2.8	3.8	5.4

*Areas are shown on the reference map on page 6.

[†]Differences across areas are statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level of significance.

Fear of Crime and Self-Protective Measures

Table 4 indicates five activities that tend to be used more than other practices by people very worried about crime: (1) keeping residence lights on at night; (2) keeping a dog for protection; (3) walking with others in the neighborhood at night; (4) having special locks installed; and (5) carrying a weapon or other instrument for defense. Respondents very worried about crime are twice as likely to choose to carry a weapon or other instrument for defense as those a little worried about crime.

Table 4 - Percentage of Respondents Currently Taking Self-Protective Measures by Level of Fear of Crime

	Percentage of Respondents *		
	Very Worried	A Little Worried	Not At All Worried
Lock residence at night	98.4	95.9	95.3
Let neighbors know if gone for an extended period of time	83.1	81.5	83.1
Keep residence lights on at night [†]	63.3	50.3	38.5
Keep a dog for protection [†]	32.1	21.2	18.5
Walk with others in neighborhood at night [†]	47.1	32.6	24.6
Keep a gun for protection	21.8	19.2	20.0
Have special locks installed [†]	54.6	44.8	33.8
Carry weapon or other instrument for defense [†]	13.7	6.7	1.5
Carry mace or other repellent	12.2	4.9	1.5
Have burglar alarm installed	12.1	12.8	10.8
Carry whistle on person or in car	7.9	7.0	3.1
Belong to neighborhood crime watch	30.2	24.1	26.2
Take other measures not previously mentioned	17.2	15.6	9.2

*Those who declined to respond to the items were not included in this table; the largest proportion of respondents that this group composed on any single item was 0.7 percent (5 respondents) regarding "walk with others in neighborhood at night."

[†]Differences across categories are statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level of significance.

Focus: Who is Currently Carrying a Weapon for Defense?

The percentage of Omaha area respondents—9.5 percent—reporting that they currently carry a weapon or other instrument for defense, as well as the seriousness of this practice, recommends a separate analysis. Table 5 demonstrates that those aged 18 - 34 are the most likely to carry a weapon. The least likely to carry a weapon in the Omaha area are people in the 35 - 64 age group.

Table 5 also shows that nonwhite residents in the Omaha area are more than twice as likely as white residents

to report carrying a weapon or other instrument for defense. Residents with low household incomes are also more likely to carry a weapon or instrument for defense. Finally, female respondents are 2.3 times as likely as male respondents to carry a weapon or instrument for defense. Education, labor force status, and marital status have no influence upon the likelihood of a person in the Omaha area to carry a weapon for defense.

All Current Self-Protective Measures

A very small proportion of Omaha area residents take no self-protective measures. The largest number of respondents, 22.7 percent, reported taking 4 of the 13 measures. The mean number of measures currently taken is 4.43.

Only gender and marital status influence the number of measures currently taken. Specifically, women in the Omaha area currently take more measures to protect themselves from crime (4.69 measures) than do males (4.13 measures), and married persons

take the most measures (4.66) followed, in order, by divorced/separated persons (4.48), widowed people (4.16), and single residents (3.82). Neither age, race, income, education, labor force status, nor location affects the total number of measures currently taken.

New Measures Taken to Protect Self from Crime

As indicated earlier, the preponderance (73.8 percent) of survey respondents felt that the crime situation in the Omaha area had worsened. In view of this, the question arose: Are people taking new measures to protect themselves? Table 6 provides a summary of overall responses to this question. It shows that 45.2 percent of the respondents in the Omaha area have taken at least one new measure. (Note: Some respondents who have taken no new measures may, nonetheless, currently be taking self-protective measures.)

Table 6 also shows that only gender influences the number of new measures adopted. Female residents

Table 5 - Percentage of Respondents Currently Carrying a Weapon or Other Instrument for Defense

	Percentage of Respondents Carrying a Weapon or Other Instrument for Defense
Total sample*	9.5
Age:†	
18 - 34	12.5
35 - 64	6.6
65 and over	10.8
Race:†	
White	8.6
Nonwhite	18.3
Household income:†	
Under \$20,000	14.7
\$20,000 - \$39,999	9.5
\$40,000 and over	5.7
Education:	
No high school degree	14.8
High school degree only	9.4
At least some college	8.7
Sex:†	
Male	5.6
Female	12.9
Labor force status:	
Employed	8.7
Unemployed	15.8
Not in labor force	11.0
Marital status:	
Married	7.8
Widowed	12.3
Divorced/separated	15.1
Single	10.5

*One respondent who declined to respond composed 0.1 percent of the total sample; this response was not included in the table. †Differences across categories are statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level of significance.

Table 6 - Responses to the Following Question: "How many new measures have you taken to protect yourself from crime?"

	Percentage of Respondents		
	No New Measures	One New Measure	Two or More New Measures
Total sample	54.8	22.2	23.0
Age:			
18 - 34	54.4	23.3	22.3
35 - 64	54.4	20.5	25.1
65 and over	56.9	23.8	19.2
Race:			
White	55.3	22.8	21.8
Nonwhite	52.1	16.9	31.0
Household income:			
Under \$20,000	54.3	20.5	25.1
\$20,000 - \$39,999	51.2	26.5	22.3
\$40,000 and over	60.8	17.5	21.6
Education:			
No high school degree	50.6	19.8	29.6
High school degree only	53.1	20.5	26.3
At least some college	56.3	23.4	20.3
Sex:†			
Male	61.7	19.8	18.4
Female	48.9	24.2	26.8

†Differences across categories are statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level of significance.

of the Omaha area are significantly more likely than male residents to have adopted new measures to protect themselves from crime.

Victimization in the Omaha Area

In an attempt to gauge the level of crime in the United States, two main sources have evolved: (1) the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), and (2) the Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Survey (NCS). The UCR is an aggregation of law enforcement agency information that includes incidents of crime reported to police agencies. In the early 1970s, on the premise that much more crime occurs than is reported in the UCR, the NCS was initiated. The NCS is a large-scale, national survey periodically administered by the Bureau of the Census to 49,000 households encompassing 101,000 persons 12 years of age and over.

The present survey adopted four household screening questions which are also used in the National Crime

Survey instrument. While these were drawn from the NCS, there was insufficient data obtained to enable a full comparison with published national findings for household and personal larceny. However, the burglary questions used in the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 are sufficient for such a comparison.

The NCS uses a complex method of working with respondents' inclination to "telescope" past criminal victimization experience to fit within the six-month time frame provided in the NCS questions. This results in overestimates of criminal victimization. One corrective aspect of the NCS method is repeatedly interviewing the same respondents over a given period of time.

The danger of overestimates of victimization resulting from "telescoping" cannot be addressed in a one-shot design, such as that of the present survey.

Burglary: Completed

Table 7 shows that 7.6 percent of respondents reported their

households had been victimized by a break-in in the past six months. This compares with a 1987 NCS figure of 4.7 percent. Given the sampling error of about 2.5 percent and the overestimation tendency described above, a conservative conclusion is that there is no significant difference in the level of reported completed burglaries between the national and the Omaha samples.

Young persons in the Omaha area were the most likely to have been burglarized, followed by those aged 35 - 64 and then 65 and over. Non-white respondents were 2.8 times more likely than white respondents to have been victimized by a completed burglary. Neither household income, education, gender, nor location influenced the likelihood that a person in the Omaha area had been victimized by a completed burglary.

Burglary: Attempted

Table 7 reports that 6.4 percent of the respondents reported that their households had been victimized by an attempted break-in in the past six

Table 7 - Victimization in the Omaha Area for Selected Property Crimes

	Percentage of Victimized Respondents			
	Household Burglary Completed	Household Burglary Attempted	Household Larceny (Object Outside Residence)	Personal Larceny (While Not at Home)
Total sample	7.6	6.4	14.9	5.6
Respondent's age:				
18 - 34	13.5 [†]	8.1	21.3 [†]	7.4
35 - 64	5.1	6.6	13.4	4.8
65 and over	0.8	2.3	4.6	3.8
Respondent's race:				
White	6.5 [†]	5.7 [†]	13.8 [†]	5.7
Nonwhite	18.3	14.1	26.8	5.6
Household income:				
Under \$20,000	10.0	9.1	13.7	4.1
\$20,000 - \$39,999	7.4	6.4	18.4	4.9
\$40,000 and over	6.7	4.1	12.9	7.2
Respondent's education:				
No high school degree	7.4	6.2	14.8	6.2
High school degree only	7.6	7.1	16.1	4.5
At least some college	7.6	6.1	14.3	6.1
Respondent's sex:				
Male	6.1	6.1	14.8	5.0
Female	8.8	6.7	15.0	6.2

[†]Differences across categories are statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level of significance.

months. This compares with a 1987 NCS figure of 1.5 percent. Once again, given the sampling error of about 2.5 percent and the overestimation tendency described earlier, it seems prudent to conclude there exists no real difference in the level of reported attempted burglaries between the national and Omaha samples.

Nonwhite residents were about 2.5 times as likely as white residents to have been victimized by an attempted break-in. Neither age, household income, education, gender, nor location had an influence on the likelihood of victimization by attempted break-in.

Household Larceny: Objects Outside the Residence

Table 7 shows that 14.9 percent of the respondents reported their households had had something stolen

from outside the residence, such as a bicycle, garden hose, garden furniture, etc., in the past six months. No direct comparison can be made with national figures available for this variable; therefore, this information is best analyzed by making selected comparisons for the Omaha area information separately.

Young respondents were the most likely to have been victimized by this type of household larceny, followed by those in the 35 - 64 year age group and those 65 and over. Nonwhite respondents were nearly twice as likely as white respondents to have been victimized by a household larceny of items outside the residence.

Table 3 shows that residents' location in the Omaha area does influence the likelihood that they have been victimized by a household larceny of the kind described above. Specifically, residents in Area H were the most likely to have been vic-

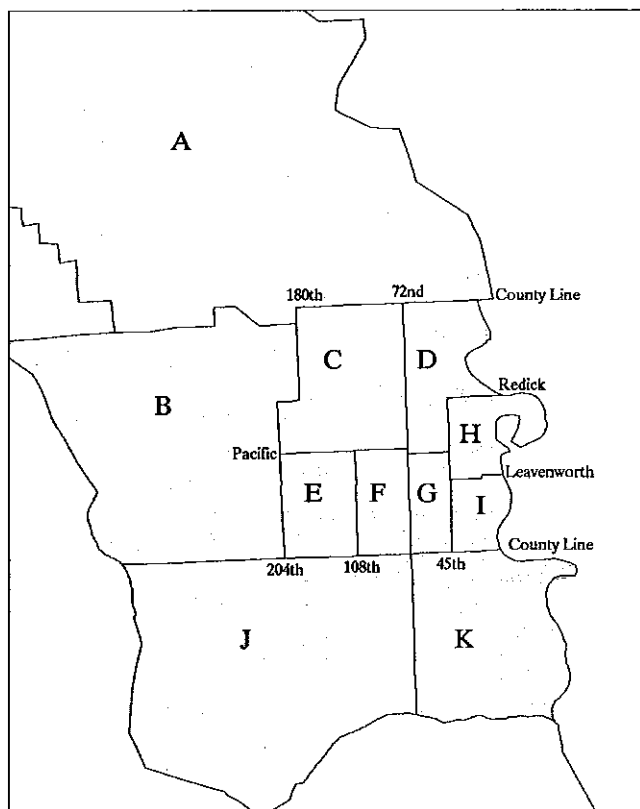
timized; those in Area B are the least likely to have been victimized.

Neither household income, education, nor gender had any influence upon this type of household larceny.

Personal Larceny

Table 10 shows that 5.6 percent of respondents had something stolen from themselves or from a household member while staying at a temporary location, such as a friend's or relative's home, a hotel or motel, or a vacation home. Again, the responses to this item provide insufficient information to compare with the published national figures on personal larceny.

None of the demographic factors examined had a significant impact on the likelihood of a personal larceny of this kind.



Reference Map Showing Geographic Distribution of the Metropolitan Sample

Area	Number of Respondents	Zip Code
A	27	68002, 68008, 68023, 68029, 68034, 68068
B	28	68007, 68022, 68064, 68069, 68116, 68118, 68130, 68135
C	90	68122, 68134, 68142, 68164
D	85	68104, 68112, 68152
E	92	68010, 68137, 68144, 68154
F	79	68114, 68124, 68127
G	68	68106, 68117, 68132
H	74	68102, 68110, 68111, 68131
I	72	68105, 68107, 68108
J	52	68028, 68046, 68059, 68128, 68136, 68138
K	112	68005, 68113, 68123, 68133, 68147, 68157

About the Omaha Conditions Survey

The Omaha Conditions Survey is part of an initiative at the Center for Public Affairs Research to monitor and improve the processes operating in Nebraska's urban areas by collecting quality information and making it accessible to those who need it. It is one component of the Nebraska Urban Conditions Research Program, which focuses on planning for the future in four key areas: economic and social conditions; minority conditions; social service delivery systems; and small town conditions.

Through the Omaha Conditions Survey, the Center for Public Affairs Research will annually gather data from a random sample of 800 persons in Douglas, Sarpy and Washington counties in Nebraska. In addition, a smaller sample of 200 individuals living in sub-areas of Omaha will be interviewed each year.

Each year's survey will focus on the public's perception of the quality of life in the Omaha area; satisfaction with community services, programs and facilities; and demographic features. In addition to these items, each annual survey will focus on a special topic such as employment and labor force experiences, health care, crime, or environmental concerns.

See the back page for information on reports covering special topics from the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990.

Published by the Center for Public Affairs Research (formerly Center for Applied Urban Research) and mailed free upon request. Copyright 1990 © Center for Public Affairs Research. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (photocopying, electronic, mechanical, recording, or other) without the prior written permission of the copyright holder.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
Delbert D. Weber, Chancellor

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE
David W. Hinton, Dean

CENTER FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS RESEARCH
Russell L. Smith, Director
Robert F. Blair, Research Associate
Joyce Carson, Word Processing Specialist
Raymond A. Clark, Senior Community Service Associate
Jerome Deichert, Senior Research Associate
David Fifer, Research Associate
Patricia Funk, Consultant
Melanie Hayes, Staff Secretary
Tim K. Himberger, Information Specialist
Chris E. Marshall, Senior Research Associate
Betty Mayhew, Office Manager
Margaret McDonald Rasmussen, Editor
Alice Schumaker, Research Associate
Joseph Baldassano, Graduate Assistant
Gregory Fant, Graduate Intern
Kelly Green, Student Intern
Kathryn Hegarty, Student Intern
Marie-Claude Lozier, Graduate Assistant



The University of Nebraska at Omaha is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Educational Institution

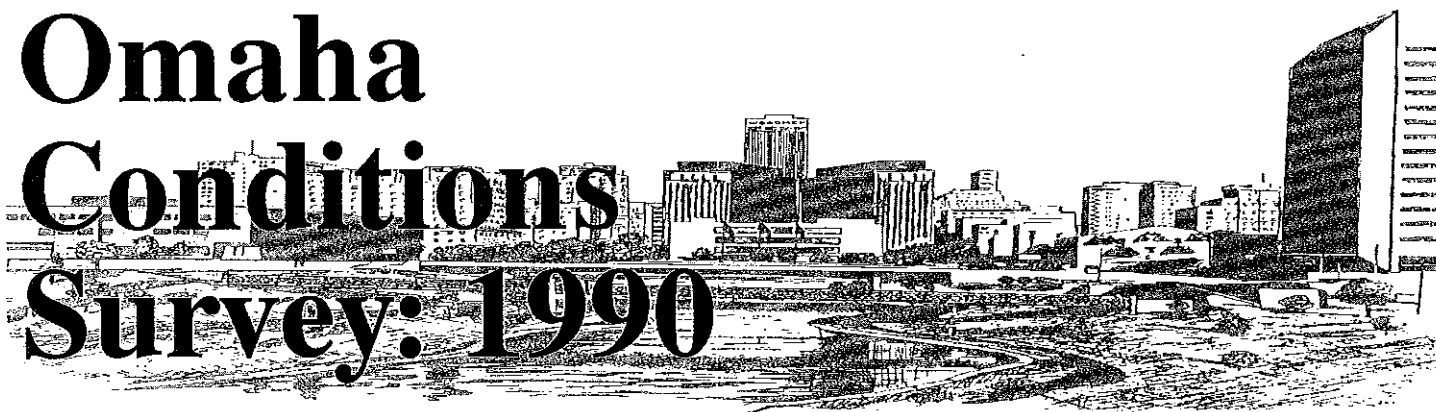
Interested in Receiving Additional Reports from the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990?

Write or call the Center for Public Affairs Research, Peter Kiewit Conference Center, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182; (402) 595-2311 for one or more of the following reports:

- Survey Methodology
- Outlook on the Future, Quality of Life, Employment, and Housing
- Opinions About Current Issues
- Labor Force Profile
- Citizen Evaluation of Services, Facilities and Programs
- Citizens Look at the Best and Worst of the Omaha Area

Center for Public Affairs Research
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Peter Kiewit Conference Center
Omaha, Nebraska 68182

Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990



Outlook on the Future, Quality of Life, Employment, and Housing

by
Russell L. Smith, Director
Center for Public Affairs Research

The Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 asked respondents to indicate their levels of agreement with a series of statements about the Omaha area's quality of life, including the outlook for the future, the quality of leadership, and the need for change. In addition, Omaha area residents were asked to

indicate their satisfaction with the area's employment and housing situations.

This report profiles perceptions of these facets of life in the greater Omaha area. In addition to summary information for all 779 respondents contained in the metropolitan sample,

differences across population sub-groups and geographic areas within the three-county study area are reported. A reference map of the survey area is presented on page 5. For complete details on the sample and respondent characteristics, see the separate report, "Survey Methodology" (the complete list of Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990 publications is on the back cover).

Key Findings

- Almost 9 out of 10 (89.3 percent) agree the future of the Omaha area looks bright, and 84.9 percent agree the area is an ideal place to live.
- When asked to give their opinions on more specific facets, 17.0 percent agreed that the area is good enough as it is without change; 45.1 percent agreed that most residents are satisfied as things are; 77.5 percent agreed that the area has good governmental leaders; and 84.8 percent agreed that the area has good corporate leaders.
- Respondents who are black, who have lower household incomes, and who have lower levels of education are generally less optimistic about the Omaha area.
- Respondents in Area H (North Omaha) are substantially less optimistic about the future and more likely to see a need for change. Respondents east of 45th Street in Douglas county, and in Sarpy County, are least likely to agree that the Omaha area has good governmental leaders.
- Fewer than two of three respondents said they were satisfied with the area's employment situation.
- Regarding housing, satisfaction is lowest for the price of housing, particularly among households earning less than \$30,000 a year.
- Rental housing was rated lowest, with low income and black respondents least satisfied with such housing. Respondents in North Omaha, Sarpy County and far western Douglas County gave the lowest ratings to rental housing.

Outlook on the Future

To develop information about views of the Omaha area's quality of life, respondents were read several different statements. Each person was asked whether he or she strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with each statement.

As table 1 shows, 89.3 percent of the respondents said they either strongly

Table 1 - Responses to the Statement, "The Omaha area's future looks bright."

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	109	14.3
Agree	573	75.0
Disagree	75	9.8
Strongly disagree	7	0.9
Total	764	100.0

agreed or agreed that the future looks bright for the Omaha area.

No differences in outlook for the Omaha area's future were found across categories of age, income, gender, home ownership, or labor force status. Race and education were, however, found to be related to outlook on the future. Among black respondents, 76.8 percent felt the Omaha area's future was bright, while 90.5 percent of white respondents did.

The higher a person's education, the more likely he or she was to agree that the area's future is bright. For example, more than 9 out of 10 residents with college degrees or higher (94.0 percent) felt the area's future was bright, while 82.7 percent of those with less than a high school degree felt so.

Table 2 provides detailed area data for each of the items profiled in this report. As can be seen, areas D, F, H and I fall below the metropolitan average, expressing less positive outlooks for the future. These areas are predominantly in the eastern portion of the survey area.

Omaha as a Place to Live

Table 3 shows the number and percentage of respondents agreeing that the Omaha area is an ideal place to live. The proportion responding affirmatively is just slightly lower (84.9 percent) than was found for outlook for the future of the area.

No statistically significant differences were found in various subgroups'

responses to this statement. As can be seen in table 2, areas A, C, D, H and J are below the metropolitan average of 84.9 percent agreeing or strongly disagreeing that the Omaha area is an ideal place to live.

Most respondents thus feel that the Omaha area is a high-quality place to live with a bright future.

The Need for Change

To assess attitudes toward change and the need for change in the Omaha area, each person was asked to indicate his or her agreement or lack of agreement with two statements. One addressed the perceived satisfaction of Omaha area residents with their community, and the second sought to find whether respondents felt the area is good enough as it is without change.

Table 4 provides information on the number and percentage of respondents agreeing or disagreeing that most residents are satisfied with things as they are in the Omaha area.

As the table shows, 45.1 percent either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. To put it simply, fewer than one-half of those responding feel Omaha area residents are satisfied with things as they are.

Table 4 also reports on a more direct measure of Omaha area residents' attitudes toward change. When asked whether they themselves agreed the Omaha area is good enough as it is without change, just 17 percent of respondents did agree. This latter measure seems to indicate that the preponderance of area respondents feel that change is desirable.

Table 4 - Responses to the Statement, "Most residents of the Omaha area are satisfied with things as they are."

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	12	1.6
Agree	317	43.5
Disagree	336	46.1
Strongly disagree	64	8.8
Total	729	100.0

Responses to the Statement, "The Omaha area is good enough as it is without trying to change it."

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	4	0.5
Agree	127	16.5
Disagree	539	70.0
Strongly disagree	100	13.0
Total	770	100.0

Table 3 - Responses to the Statement, "The Omaha area is an ideal place to live."

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	92	12.0
Agree	558	72.9
Disagree	100	13.1
Strongly disagree	15	2.0
Total	765	100.0

Table 2 - Percentage of Respondents Agreeing* with Statements About the Omaha Area by Survey Sub-Area

Statement	Area											Metro Average
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	
Omaha area future looks bright	96.2	92.9	91.0	84.0	94.4	88.6	95.5	69.9	91.4	88.0	93.7	89.3
Area is an ideal place to live	68.0	92.9	82.1	81.1	91.1	91.0	89.6	75.6	85.7	79.8	87.0	84.9
Most residents are satisfied as things are	52.4	48.0	41.2	36.2	55.4	56.2	48.4	30.6	39.7	44.6	49.0	45.1
Area is good enough without change	25.9	7.1	12.3	18.1	22.0	17.8	22.4	6.8	17.1	11.8	21.4	17.0
Area has good governmental leaders	78.3	77.0	81.7	75.7	80.7	88.7	85.5	66.6	66.7	72.9	75.7	77.4
Area has good corporate leaders	89.5	85.2	90.3	77.1	89.0	85.4	86.2	78.1	78.5	80.4	90.8	84.9

*Figures include persons who "strongly agree" or "agree."

One interesting issue is why so many respondents say the Omaha area is an ideal place to live and that the future looks bright, yet majority support is not given to statements that the area is good enough as it is without trying to change it. While several possible explanations exist and will be examined in future reports on Omahans' attitudes toward the area, it is very likely that residents know and expect that the area must change if the current quality of life is to be maintained. National studies of community attitudes have shown that, even when residents report overall satisfaction with their communities, they typically identify one or more areas for improvement and change.

Examination of differences across most population subgroups failed to indicate statistically significant variations in perception that the area is good enough as it is without change. The only exception was for race. Among white respondents, 82.0 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 93.0 percent of black respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

As table 2 indicates, areas B, C, H and J are less likely to agree that the Omaha area is good enough as it is.

Responses to the statement about residents' satisfaction with things as they are differed across race, income, gender and education groups. Respondents who were black (73.2 percent), had a high school education or less (60.0 percent), had household incomes of less than \$30,000 a year (59.8 percent), or who were males (60.2 percent) were more likely to disagree.

Quality of Leadership

Two statements focused on the quality of governmental and corporate leaders in the area. Summary information presented in table 5 indicates broad approval of the area's leadership. However, just over one in five respondents (22.6 percent) said they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that the Omaha area has good governmental leaders.

For the governmental leadership measure, no statistically significant

differences were found across subgroups, with the exception of race and income. Those with household incomes of less than \$30,000 a year were less likely to agree with the statement. Black respondents were also less likely to agree that the area has good governmental leaders. Among Blacks, for example, 57.8 percent agreed or strongly agreed, while 79.3 percent of Whites did.

As table 2 indicates, areas B, D, H, I, J and K gave the lowest ratings to governmental leaders in the Omaha area. These areas encompass Sarpy County, eastern Douglas County, and the far western area of Douglas County, which is primarily rural.

Respondents were also asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with a statement that the Omaha area has good corporate leaders. Table 5 summarizes information for this question and shows that almost 85 percent said they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. This is a somewhat better rating than for governmental leaders. As was the case for governmental leadership, black respondents were much less likely to agree that the Omaha area has good corporate leadership.

Table 5 - Responses to the Statement, "The Omaha area has good governmental leaders."

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	34	4.8
Agree	518	72.7
Disagree	139	19.5
Strongly disagree	22	3.1
Total	713	100.1*

*Numbers do not add to 100 due to rounding.

Responses to the Statement, "The Omaha area has good corporate leaders."

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	41	5.9
Agree	547	78.9
Disagree	91	13.1
Strongly disagree	14	2.0
Total	693	99.9*

*Numbers do not add to 100 due to rounding.

Employment and Business Opportunities

To measure attitudes about the Omaha area's employment situation, respondents were asked to rate the availability of jobs, the quality of jobs, and opportunities to start new businesses. First each person was asked to indicate how important each item was. Response choices were very important, somewhat important, slightly important, and not important. Next, respondents were asked how satisfied they were with each of the items. Choices included very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, and very dissatisfied.

As table 6 shows, 62.4 percent said they were satisfied with the availability of jobs and that this was an important item to them. A somewhat smaller proportion—59.3 percent—said they were satisfied with the quality of jobs in the Omaha area and that this was important to them. Just over 62 percent reported they were satisfied with new business opportunities in the area.

For each of these facets, respondents who had household incomes of less than \$30,000 a year, less than a high school degree, were between the ages of 50 and 64, or who were black were generally less satisfied. The one exception to these general relationships exists for satisfaction with new business opportunities. For this item, older respondents were more likely than younger persons to express dissatisfaction; just 18.5 percent of those aged 18-24 said they were dissatisfied with this item and that it was important to them, while for those aged 50-64 the percentage was 34.3.

The most dramatic differences in satisfaction across subgroups were for race and age. For example, black respondents saying they were dissatisfied with the availability of jobs and that the item was important outnumbered similar white respondents more than two to one (67.9 percent and 28.8 percent, respectively). For respondents aged 50-64, the percentage dissatisfied with the availability of jobs was 43.0 percent, while for those aged 18-24, the percentage was 27.5 percent.

Although data are not shown, areas B, D, H and I are less likely to

Table 6 - Satisfaction and Importance Ratings for Jobs and Business Opportunities in the Omaha Area

Item	Percentage Rating			
	Satisfied, Unimportant*	Satisfied, Important†	Dissatisfied, Unimportant‡	Dissatisfied, Important§
Availability of jobs (N=689)	3.3	62.4	2.0	32.2
Quality of jobs (N=686)	2.8	59.3	1.9	36.0
Opportunities to start new business (N=606)	5.3	62.2	4.3	28.2

* Respondents were somewhat or very satisfied with services that were slightly or not important to them.

† Respondents were somewhat or very satisfied with services that were somewhat or very important to them.

‡ Respondents were somewhat or very dissatisfied with services that were slightly or not important to them.

§ Respondents were somewhat or very dissatisfied with services that were somewhat or very important to them.

Source: Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990, Center for Public Affairs Research, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

be satisfied with job availability. These same areas give lower ratings to the quality of jobs in the Omaha area and to new business opportunities. Areas B (western Douglas County) and J (western Sarpy County) also give low ratings to new business opportunities.

Satisfaction With Housing

Two aspects of housing were addressed in the survey: housing for sale and rental housing. For each of these topics, the survey contained specific items on the amount, price, and quality of housing. As with the employment items, respondents were first asked to indicate how important the item was to them, then to rate their satisfaction with it.

Housing for Sale

Results for the housing-for-sale items are presented in table 7. As the table shows, the price of housing has the smallest percentage of respondents (59.2 percent) who both are satisfied and feel the item is important. The highest rating went to the quality of housing for sale in the Omaha area, with 70.8 percent saying they are satisfied and that quality is important.

Several interesting patterns emerge when variations in ratings are examined across population subgroups. For example, black respondents are more likely to be dissatisfied than white respondents. Young persons are more satisfied with the amount of housing, but less satisfied with the quality. Finally, persons

reporting total household incomes of less than \$30,000 per year are more likely to be dissatisfied with both the price and quality of housing than are persons from households earning more than \$30,000 per year.

Table 8 provides detail on the percentage of respondents indicating they are dissatisfied and that the item is important for each of the housing facets by area. For the housing-for-sale items, it can be seen that areas A, D, G, H and J are each above the metropolitan average dissatisfaction level for two or more of the three facets—availability, price and quality. Areas H, in North Omaha, and J, in western Sarpy County, are above the metropolitan average dissatisfaction level on all three of the items.

Table 7 - Satisfaction and Importance Ratings for Housing in the Omaha Area

Item	Percentage Rating			
	Satisfied, Unimportant*	Satisfied, Important†	Dissatisfied, Unimportant‡	Dissatisfied, Important§
Amount of housing for sale (N=615)	20.3	65.5	3.4	10.7
Price of housing for sale (N=630)	11.9	59.2	4.3	24.6
Quality of housing for sale (N=627)	10.0	70.8	2.2	16.9
Amount of rental housing (N=524)	14.7	55.7	5.0	24.6
Price of rental housing (N=472)	11.8	46.1	4.6	37.5
Quality of rental housing (N=529)	11.3	55.0	4.2	29.5

* Respondents were somewhat or very satisfied with services that were slightly or not important to them.

† Respondents were somewhat or very satisfied with services that were somewhat or very important to them.

‡ Respondents were somewhat or very dissatisfied with services that were slightly or not important to them.

§ Respondents were somewhat or very dissatisfied with services that were somewhat or very important to them.

Source: Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990, Center for Public Affairs Research, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Table 8 - Percentage of Respondents Saying They Were Dissatisfied with Housing by Area

	Area											Metro Average
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	
Amount of housing for sale (N=615)	27.8	12.5	4.1	9.1	6.8	10.3	8.3	20.3	8.3	21.7	7.7	10.7
Price of housing for sale (N=630)	41.2	8.3	19.4	27.9	17.3	18.8	25.0	41.1	23.6	34.1	23.9	24.6
Quality of housing for sale (N=627)	11.1	8.3	11.8	29.9	11.1	13.4	18.4	23.2	21.2	27.3	10.8	16.9
Amount of rental housing (N=524)	43.8	29.4	22.2	27.7	10.7	10.2	24.0	43.1	31.3	29.0	23.3	24.6
Price of rental housing (N=472)	37.5	35.3	28.6	49.0	22.8	25.0	39.2	54.0	45.8	40.6	40.0	37.5
Quality of rental housing (N=529)	25.0	31.3	20.3	34.6	19.0	21.7	30.0	45.1	40.4	27.3	31.7	29.5

Rental Housing

Table 7 also provides information on ratings for rental housing. Again, the same three housing facets were examined: availability, price and quality. As the table shows, the ratings are lower for rental housing than for housing-for-sale. The amount of rental housing received the highest rating, with quality and price following. Particularly noteworthy is that 37.5 percent of those responding said they were dissatisfied with the

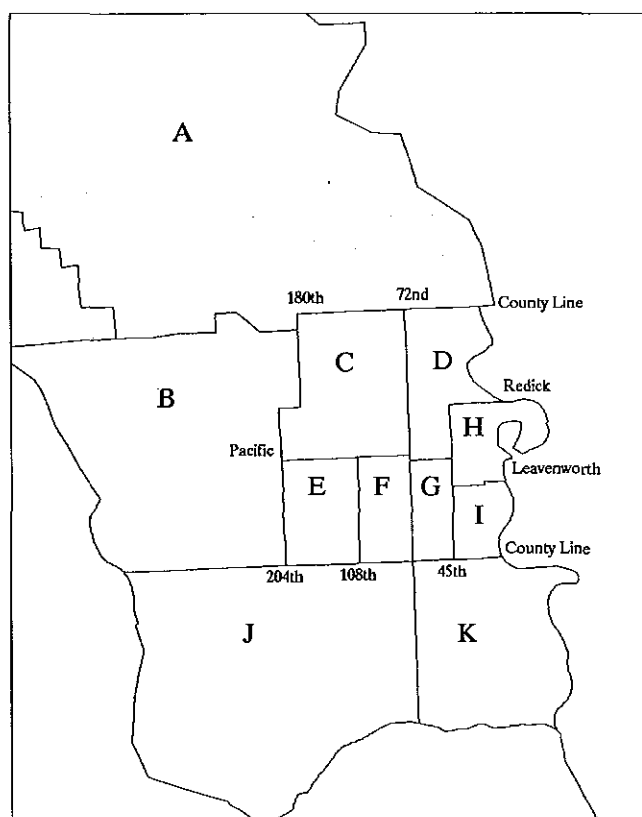
price of rental housing and that it was an important item to them.

Rental housing ratings did not vary across age or education levels. However, respondents from households earning less than \$30,000 per year and black respondents reported lower levels of satisfaction. For example, among black respondents, 43.5 percent were dissatisfied with the amount of rental housing, 56.4 percent were dissatisfied with the price of rental housing, and 47.8 percent were dissatisfied with the quality

of rental housing. Among white respondents, the percentages were 21.9 percent, 39.7 percent and 27.5 percent, respectively.

Generally, areas that reported being less satisfied with the housing-for-sale items also reported lower levels of satisfaction with rental housing (table 8). Several additional areas, however, were dissatisfied with rental housing; most notably areas B (western Douglas County) and I (South Omaha).

Reference Map Showing Geographic Distribution of the Metropolitan Sample



Area	Number of Respondents	Zip Code
A	27	68002, 68008, 68023, 68029, 68034, 68068
B	28	68007, 68022, 68064, 68069, 68116, 68118, 68130, 68135
C	90	68122, 68134, 68142, 68164
D	85	68104, 68112, 68152
E	92	68010, 68137, 68144, 68154
F	79	68114, 68124, 68127
G	68	68106, 68117, 68132
H	74	68102, 68110, 68111, 68131
I	72	68105, 68107, 68108
J	52	68028, 68046, 68059, 68128, 68136, 68138
K	112	68005, 68113, 68123, 68133, 68147, 68157

About the Omaha Conditions Survey

The Omaha Conditions Survey is part of an initiative at the Center for Public Affairs Research to monitor and improve the processes operating in Nebraska's urban areas by collecting quality information and making it accessible to those who need it. It is one component of the Nebraska Urban Conditions Research Program, which focuses on planning for the future in four key areas: economic and social conditions; minority conditions; social service delivery systems; and small town conditions.

Through the Omaha Conditions Survey, the Center for Public Affairs Research will annually gather data from a random sample of 800 persons in Douglas, Sarpy and Washington counties in Nebraska. In addition, a smaller sample of 200 individuals living in sub-areas of Omaha will be interviewed each year.

Each year's survey will focus on the public's perception of the quality of life in the Omaha area; satisfaction with community services, programs and facilities; and demographic features. In addition to these items, each annual survey will focus on a special topic such as employment and labor force experiences, health care, crime, or environmental concerns.

See the box at right for information on reports covering special topics from the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990.

Interested in Receiving Additional Reports from the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990?

Write or call the Center for Public Affairs Research, Peter Kiewit Conference Center, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182; (402) 595-2311 for one or more of the following reports:

- Survey Methodology
- Crime in the Omaha Area
- Opinions About Current Issues
- Labor Force Profile
- Citizen Evaluation of Services, Facilities and Programs
- Citizens Look at the Best and Worst of the Omaha Area

Published by the Center for Public Affairs Research (formerly Center for Applied Urban Research) and mailed free upon request. Copyright 1990 © Center for Public Affairs Research. All rights reserved. No part of this pub-

lication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (photocopying, electronic, mechanical, recording, or other) without the prior written permission of the copyright holder.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
Delbert D. Weber, Chancellor

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
AND COMMUNITY SERVICE
David W. Hinton, Dean

CENTER FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS
RESEARCH
Russell L. Smith, Director
Robert F. Blair, Research Associate
Joyce Carson, Word Processing Specialist

Raymond A. Clark, Senior Community Service Associate
Jerome Deichert, Senior Research Associate
David Fifer, Research Associate
Patricia Funk, Consultant
Melanie Hayes, Staff Secretary
Tim K. Humberger, Information Specialist
Chris E. Marshall, Senior Research Associate
Betty Mayhew, Office Manager
Margaret McDonald Rasmussen, Editor
Alice Schumaker, Research Associate

Joseph Baldassano, Graduate Assistant
Gregory Fant, Graduate Intern
Kelly Green, Student Intern
Kathryn Hegarty, Student Intern
Marie-Claude Lozier, Graduate Assistant



The University of Nebraska at
Omaha is an Equal
Opportunity/Affirmative Action
Educational Institution

Center for Public Affairs Research
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Peter Kiewit Conference Center
Omaha, Nebraska 68182